

MAGAZINE+DISC/PLAYABLE DEMOS EVERY MONTH

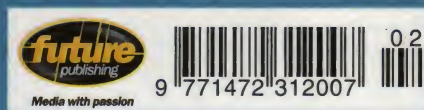
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20+ PAGES OF REVIEWS

UNREAL TOURNAMENT/SUMMONER/KESSEN/SKY
SURFER/ARMoured CORE 2/SPACE ACE/MORE

» INSIDE

THE BOUNCER - FULL PREVIEW

TALK TO YOUR PS2

MIKAMI ON RESIDENT EVIL 4 AND MORE

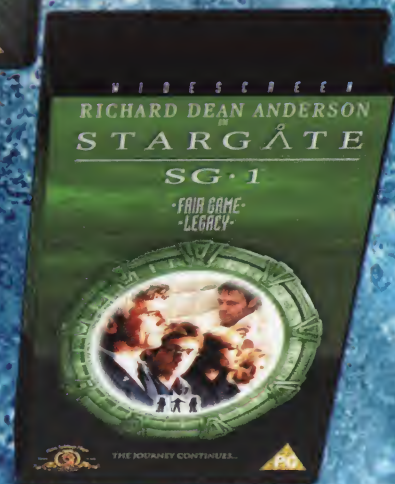
METAL GEAR SOLID 2: FIRST
HANDS-ON REPORT

ON-SET WITH TOMB RAIDER: THE MOVIE

GRAN TURISMO 3: A-SPEC - RALLY
MODE REVEALED INSIDE

AND, ERM, SADDAM HUSSEIN

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PlayStation®2

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK



ON THE COVER
Lock and load, ladies and gents. It's time to kill at will as *Unreal Tournament* hits the PS2.

ISSUE 004/FEBRUARY 2001

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AHEAD
of the
game**

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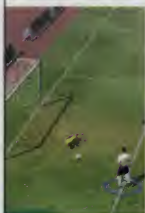
ON THE DISC

FIVE GREAT PLAYABLE DEMOS



PLAYABLE DEMO 1/MOTO GP

Tame the turns at Donington with Namco's excellent superbike racer.



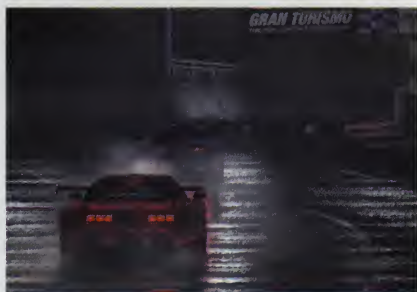
PLAYABLE DEMO 2/ISS

Even the score as England take on Germany in Konami's football fan favourite.



PLUS/PLAYABLE DEMOS OF:

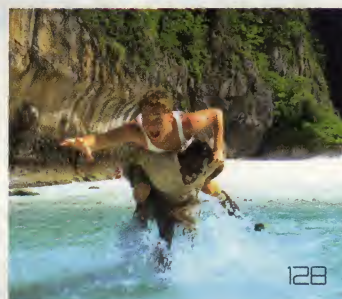
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NATURAL BORN CHILLERS

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EDITOR'S LETTER



Long live the new flesh

Whether you've been gleaming your PS2 Infotrix from us, a rival mag, *XFM* or SuperGoGoYOW!! Web site, you'll have noticed a few regular faces each and every month. *Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec*, *Metal Gear Solid 2*, *Unreal Tournament*... Great games that we've been playing to death (see this issue for exclusive hands-on info on all these) and can't wait to turn into grist for our reviewing mill. But while telling the world about these games' freshly unveiled modes, characters, cars and those now-inevitable *Matrix* timeslice spinny-round bits twists our proverbial melons, there's a feeling round these parts that we're in need of a few new heroes. Not existing franchises, not brand extensions, not games that – let's face it – we've been reading about for over a year and are in danger of being hyped to death before they've even left their developers' brains, let alone hit the shop shelves.

And so hello *Internal Affairs*. And hello *WinBack*. And similar greetings go to *Silent Hill 2*, *Legion: Legend of Excalibur*, *Mafia*, *Soldier Of Fortune*, *Shiny Red Car*, *Baldur's Gate*, *Shadow Of Memories*, *Extermination*, *Seven*, *Arctic Thunder*... Sure, some of those games are sequels or PS2 versions of existing PC titles but the thing is they're brand-spanking new. True, not all will stay the course or even see the light of day before the end of 2001 but in this collection of boy racers, arcade thrillers, epic adventures and horror chillers exists a brave whole world of promise. New avenues to head down, old envelopes to stretch, fresh technologies to explore and dated genres to rejuvenate.

These titles are just the start of a flood that will wash over the year like a tsunami with a killer migraine – and in doing so they'll stretch the PlayStation 2, utilise the forthcoming online and Hard Disk Drive, silence any remaining critics out there and raise the bar for any new developers who throw their hat into the PS2 ring. The snowball's finally rolling and, as with this issue and the next and the next, we'll be here to show you what's cool and what's wilting.

And until those games turn up? Then we'll just have to be satisfied with such tired old racers as *Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec*, the dated deathmatches of this issue's cover star, *Unreal Tournament*, and trawling through tedious demos of *Metal Gear 2*.

Damn, there's my point ruined.

MIKE GOLDSMITH
Senior Editor

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#04

Helping Official PS2 brave the unknown void of 2001 are...

PAUL RIGBY

Regular contributor Paul, has friends in high places. Just last month he was driving around London in the back of a BMW with none other than Radio One 'dance guru' Pete Tong, for the purpose of 'researching a feature'. "Pete turned up the volume and warped his way round the busy streets, playing as-yet unheard albums by Leftfield and Goldie," says Paul. He can't remember much about the experience as he was too busy being sick into his bag. "I was trying to be cool, speaking in DJ lingo and that," he recalls. "But then I said it had 'all gone a bit Pete Tong' and I don't think that went down well."



Game of the moment: "ISS. Because the only way to stop Liverpool playing pathetically one week and brilliantly the next is if I'm the manager. With ISS I can prove that."

I'm holding my breath for: "The perfect PS2 RPG – Final Fantasy coded especially for PS2 possibly?"

RYAN BUTT

Having worked on countless games magazines over the past decade, Ryan's most memorable moment came whilst enjoying a cool beer in Cannes. Reclining peacefully in the summer sun, he was shocked when noticed Hideo Kojima of Metal Gear Solid fame sat down with his translator behind him. Overcome by the emotion of sharing a beer garden with the game guru, Ryan wracked his brain for something interesting to say. The best he could muster was "So Mr Kojima, what makes you tick?" But when he turned the talented programmer had gone. Ryan has since avoided conducting interviews.



Game of the moment: Cool Boarders: Code Allen. "Well, I haven't had time to play SSX yet..."

I'm holding my breath for: "My baby – I got your Operations Editor, Lou, up the duff about six months back!"

PAUL FITZPATRICK

The Fitz, as he is better known in the office, is OPS2's very own staff writer. He spends most of his day being polite, but underneath his quiet, restrained exterior lies a hard man. Just the other day he left a tea bag in our deputy editor's mug. "It was a kind of warning," he glowered. "tea bag this time, unwanted sugar next. He'll learn soon." Fitz has an illustrious past. He's dated a descendant of Karl Marx and lived near the very first UK McDonalds on Woolwich High St. "I'm also a fan of World Dryer Corporation brand hand dryers," he confided. "You can always rely on them for a quality blast of hot air."



Game of the moment: "SSX. I just can't get enough of its frosty goodness. It's a perfect balance of speed, fun and depth. Can you have a balance between three things?"

I'm holding my breath for: "About one minute, ten seconds. Failing that The Getaway."

MR JAGO

Hyper trendy illustrator Mr Jago was born in sunny Suffolk but has since moved to 'da getto' of Bristol, so he can explore his B-Boy roots. There he resides with a big stack of coloured pencils, a marker pen and a block of paper he bought cheap from a Hyper Value. The six-foot one tall artist makes himself even taller by wearing custom designed trainers that make him over 27-feet tall. This enables him to reach railway arches and water tanks that others can't reach and practice his graffiti style. Luckily we get to see his work in the magazine. Check out his online gaming interpretation on page 59.



Game of the moment: "My game of the moment is Speedball 2100 because it makes me feel like a big man..."

I'm holding my breath for: "My second trip to Japan in April. The first trip changed my brain."

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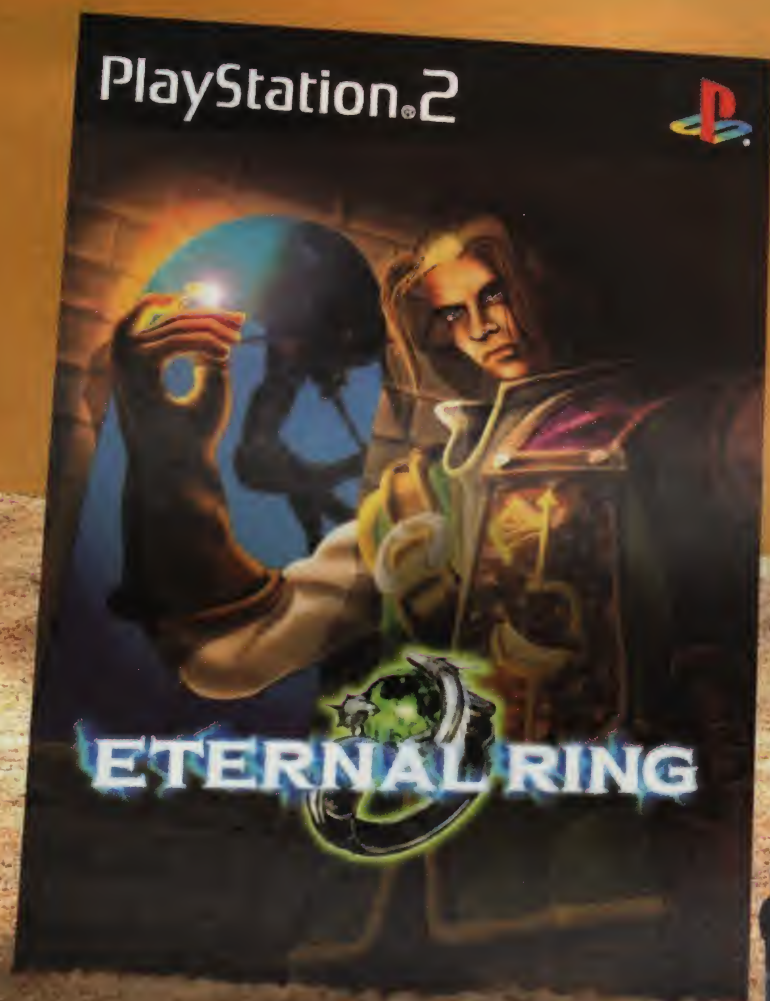


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Earth Year 223: following Earth's destruction, Zio Matrix, the World's largest corporation, obtained detailed plans relating to the Mars Research Project. Included in these plans was the Mars Terraforming Project, which detailed the use of unmanned artificially intelligent A.C. units.

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- DAILY RADAR HIT

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Facing evil reborn, two spellbinding fantasy adventures await Darius and Sharline as well as fascinating characters and unforgiving monsters.

'Evergrace is both a solid and completely enjoyable role-playing game experience'

- IGN.COM

ETERNAL RING

Cain, a young magician, is sent by his King to investigate mysterious happenings on the 'Island of No Return'. Legend has it that magical powers lie dormant at the heart of the island, protected by enormous dragons. Armed with only his sword and natural talent as a sorcerer, Cain attempts to be the first person to return from the island alive.

As Cain, you must venture forth through challenging scenarios whilst defeating any foe that stands in the way of you and your search for the ultimate Magic Ring.

'Eternal Ring for the PS2 will satisfy your hunger for a bigger, better, first person RPG'

- GAMEPRO.COM 4.5/5.0

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>> ON THE DISC

PLAYABLE DEMOS



This month we bring you a fully playable demo of Namco's sleeper hit, *Moto GP*. Prepare to be taken aback, especially by those TV-style replays. Plus we've brought you a selection of the best demos from discs one to three. Apologies if you've bought *OPS2* from Issue #01, but early days mean that developers are concentrating on finishing games rather than demos. Trust us when we say that with our move to DVD planned in the near future, we have treats in the pipeline. For those that missed the first three issues check out what we've got:

Go off-roading in *Wild Wild Racing*, play England vs Germany in *ISS*, visit 3rd Century China in *Dynasty Warriors 2* and face-off in *NHL 2001*. And that's not all. Sit back and watch the exclusive *GT3: A-Spec* rolling demo. We've also included Sony's mini-movie, *Emotion: Wonder* and more.

Rest assured that we will be exclusively bringing you best playable demos over the coming months. *GT3: A-Spec*, *MGS2*, *Red Faction* and *Devil May Cry* are all confirmed. Until then, go have yourself a great month.

Catherine Channon
Disc Editor

PS To use this disc insert it into your PS2. Then scroll between games and rolling demos with the **↓** and **↑** keys. To choose within a section use **←** and **→**. Press **ⓧ** to start your choice up. Please note, you may have to reset the PS2 after some demos.



| PLAYABLE DEMO ONE

MOTO GP

Publisher: SCEE/Game type: Motorbike racing/Demo type: Playable/Out: Now/Players: 1 (Full game 1-2)

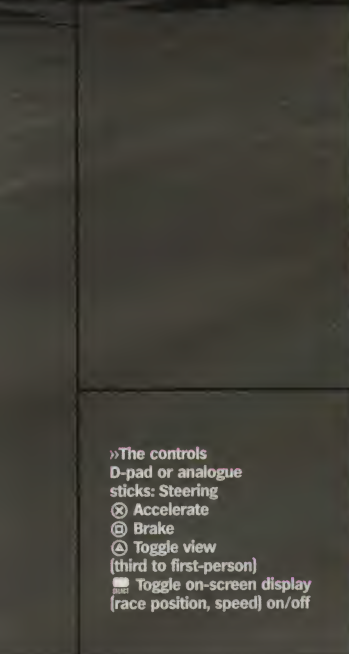
THE GAME

Four wheels good, two wheels bad? Not any more. *Moto GP* has taken the superbike racing game (a sub-genre not exactly flooded with classics) and constructed a heady mix of Namco arcade know-how and the learning curve depth that will have you leaning into corners and scraping your virtual kneecaps in no time. Strap on your helmet, climb astride the throbbing monster of your choice and take on the world's finest superbike riders over five world-class tracks. Whether you opt for Arcade or Season mode this is no game for boy racers. Embrace the joys of strategic braking and you'll be picking your way through the pack to snatch victory like a pro. Then sit back, put your feet up and watch possibly the best replays ever to grace a racing game of any kind.

**Moto GP* was reviewed in full in issue #03.

THE DEMO

Once you've selected *Moto GP* from the disc menu screen you'll find yourself at the demo title screen. Leave this for about a minute and you'll be treated to a magnificent race demo from the full game. Press **▶** straight away and you'll be taken (via a reminder of the controls) to the game itself. You are at the back of a grid of 21 riders, on a Technical Sports Racing team, Honda AC50M and have the time it takes to complete one full lap of the Donington circuit to make your way to the front of the pack. In this game, finding a good racing line and braking at the right time is going to get you a lot further than just mashing the accelerator. Once you've crossed the finish line you'll be shown a replay of the race (well worth watching) after which the disc will reset back to the menu screen. If you want to exit the replay at any time simply press **▶** and **ⓧ**.



I PLAYABLE DEMO TWO

WILD WILD RACING

Publisher: Rage/Game type: Off-road racer

Demo type: Playable/Out: Now/Players: 1 (Full Game 1-2)

THE GAME

So wild they named it twice, *WWR* is a racer for those who like their vehicular showdowns virtually tarmac free. In the full game you get to race ludicrously high-powered buggies over five exhaustingly complex, short cut riddled tracks for prestige, medals and ever more powerful cars. In addition to this you can test your mud flecked mettle on the very entertaining Stunt and Skill challenges.

*Wild Wild Racing was reviewed in issue #01.

THE DEMO

We're giving you free range and full throttle over the serpentine contours of the India course, racing against three persistent opponents, and the chance to try out the Mud Blaster Challenge. In this you must negotiate the kind of arena that would give a professional stuntman nightmares in the fastest time possible, finishing off with a double leap over rows of trucks. Up for it?



»The controls
D-pad or left analogue sticks: Steering
X Accelerate
A Reverse
C Handbrake
B Brake
R Rear View (while pressed down)
L Change View (distant, close, in-car)

I PLAYABLE DEMO THREE

INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER

Publisher: Konami/Game type: Football sim

Demo type: Playable/Out: Now/Players: 1 (Full game 1-8)

THE GAME

The hardcore footie sim fan's franchise of choice for years, *International Superstar Soccer* on PS2 brings the graphical flair of the series up to the unbeatable gameplay the series has always boasted. Fully interactive camera angles, a host of competitions and some frankly stupendous goal stuffing action await you in the full game but we've got a treat for you right here.

*A full review of the game appeared in issue #01.

THE DEMO

Reality can sometimes leave a lot to be desired, especially where the England team's recent form has been concerned. This demo gives you the chance to redress the balance and kick Teutonic 'arsch' with an England team that plays like it should. That is, the way you would do it. You've got five minutes of playing time per Clash of the Titans to rewrite history.



»The controls.
D-pad or left analogue stick: Dribble
Right analogue stick: Keeper

Attacking moves

R Cursor Change
B Swerve
A Dash
C One-two Pass
X Through Ball
C Lob
X Pass
B Kick

Defensive moves

R Cursor Change
B Dash
C Slide
X Tackle
B + (X or C) Charge

»The controls
D-pad or analogue sticks: Steering
X Accelerate
B Brake
A Toggle view (third to first-person)
L Toggle on-screen display (race position, speed) on/off



>>ON THE DISC

MORE DEMOS

Talk to us!

»Comments and queries about this cover disc should go to me, Cat, at PS2@futurenet.co.uk. Sorry, I can't answer your questions over the phone.

»If you have further problems with your disc pop the troublesome thing in an envelope and send it to the following address. We'll test it and, if faulty, send you a new CD. We're at Official PlayStation 2 Magazine, Disc Returns, Customer Services, Future Publishing, Carey Court, Bancroft Road Industrial Estate, Somerton, Somerset TA11 6TB

*Remember, though, this disc will only work on a PS2

I PLAYABLE DEMO FOUR



DYNASTY WARRIORS 2

Publisher: Midas Interactive/Game type: Slash-'em-up
Demo type: Playable/Out: Now/Players: 1

THE GAME

The location? 3rd Century China. Your mission? Lead your allied troops by ferocious example to victory against a tenacious opposing army. One part strategy to two parts full-on blade swinging, DW2 puts you in the midst of impressively rendered battles with up to 40 warriors fighting each other at any one time. Lead by example, inspire your men and victory can be yours.

*Dynasty Warriors 2 was reviewed in Issue #02.

THE DEMO

You get to lead one of the allied army attacks during the Battle of Hu Lao Gate, 191 AD, as one of three capable generals - Zhao Yun, Dian Wei or Sun Shang Xiang. Each has a different starting point in the battle, and their own trademark weapon. You have four minutes to fight your way through the enemy ranks with the help of your loyal soldiers and personal bodyguards.

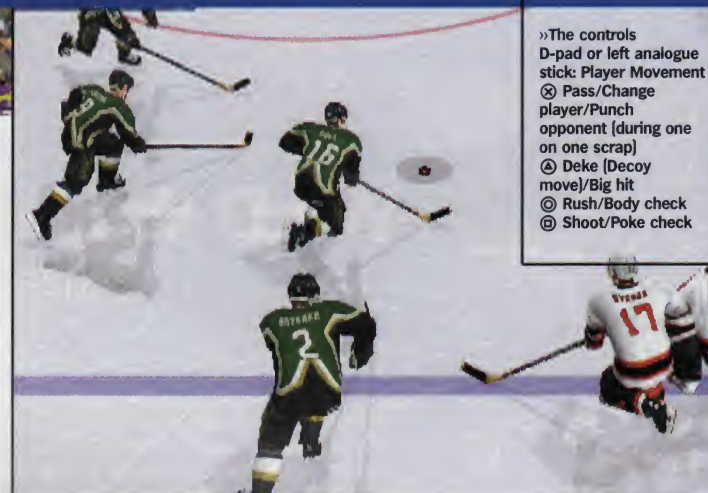
»The controls

D-pad or left analogue stick: Warrior Movement
 ⓧ Jump [The longer you keep ⓧ pressed, the higher you'll jump]/Mount Horse/Dismount Horse
 Ⓐ Charge Attack [More powerful than regular attack]
 Ⓢ Charge/Execute Musou Special Attack
 Ⓢ Normal Attack
 Ⓢ Raise bow (Ⓢ+Ⓢ) Fire bow
 Ⓢ Toggles between current area map and battle zone map
 Ⓢ Guard/Shift [Pressing Ⓢ in conjunction with direction keys will allow you to sidestep and shuffle backwards without turning your whole body]
 Ⓢ Toggles soldier health bars on/off

»Additional Attack Information

You can make a combination attack by pressing Normal Attack (Ⓢ) up to four times in quick succession. Charge Attack (Ⓐ) can be used in conjunction with Normal Attack (Ⓢ) with different result
 Ⓐ A wide sweeping attack
 Ⓐ An attack that lifts your opponent
 ⓈⓈⓈⓈ An attack that stuns your opponent
 ⓈⓈⓈⓈⓈ An attack that knocks your opponents flying
 By combining Jump (ⓧ) with Normal Attack (Ⓢ) you perform a Jump Attack that is useful against enemies on horseback.
 The Musou Attack (Ⓢ) is an explosive attack that you can perform when the Special Gauge (shaded pink) at the bottom of the screen, is full. Fighting will fill the gauge but you can concentrate on filling it quickly by keeping Ⓢ pressed. You will not be able to fight while you are charging the Special Gauge.

I PLAYABLE DEMO FIVE



»The controls
 D-pad or left analogue stick: Player Movement
 ⓧ Pass/Change player/Punch opponent [during one on one scrap]
 Ⓐ Deke [Decoy move]/Big hit
 Ⓢ Rush/Body check
 Ⓢ Shoot/Poke check

NHL 2001

Publisher: EA Sports/Game type: Ice hockey sim
Demo type: Playable/Out: Now/Players: 1-2

THE GAME

With the possible exception of boxing, no activity fuses the arenas of sport and wanton aggression with as much synergy as professional ice hockey. NHL 2001 plays up to this allowing some very cranky challenges and even the occasional fist fight to punctuate its supremely well-judged gameplay. From the individual player's changing expressions to the puck-cam goal replay, the graphics are every bit as good as the match action.
 *A full review of NHL 2001 appeared in Issue #02.

THE DEMO

This demo gives you a good six minutes of ice-bound stick rattling between the visiting Dallas Stars and the New Jersey Devils. Play as either team against the PS2 or a mate, pausing at any point to use the interactive camera system to replay that opposition shaming moment with swooping scrutiny.

I ROLLING DEMO TWO

ORPHEN

Publisher: Activision/Game type: RPG
Demo type: Rolling/Out: Now/Players: 1

PUTTING A HEALTHY action 'cat' amongst the habitually slow-moving RPG 'pigeons', Orphen shelves some of the more impenetrable role-playing statistics in favour of some welcome, hands-on puzzle solving and adventuring. Even the battle system allows for uncharacteristically spontaneous scrapping. And it's set on the encouragingly confrontational Chaos Island...
 *Orphen was reviewed in Issue #01, but you can see it running in glorious videovision right here.



I ROLLING DEMO THREE

DEAD OR ALIVE 2

Publisher: SCEE/Game type: Beat-'em-up/Demo type: Rolling/Out: Now/Players: 1-4

WHOEVER SAID MARTIAL arts required balls was only partially right. Seems that sizeable marmarines are a pretty good substitute if you're female (or Bass Armstrong). Welcome to Tekken's brash and breezy cousin on the PS2 beat-'em-up family tree. Fast, and yes, furious

DOA2 serves up dollop after dollop of frenetic fight action with multi-level arenas, intuitive controls and positively unfair tag team moves. If you're looking to buy a beat-'em-up, you really should see this rolling demo.
 *DOA2 was reviewed in Issue #02.



I ROLLING DEMO ONE

GT3: A-SPEC

Publisher: SCEE/Game type: Driving sim/Demo type: Rolling/Out: March/Players: 1-2 (Up to 6 with i-link)

HEAT HAZE ON the Tarmac. The pitch black trails of burnt rubber tracing the overshoot of a deceptively sharp corner. Smoke spilling from the pram wheels of a careering Mini Cooper. Dust obscuring your view in a gripping rally. *Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec* is turning automotive side effects into gaming poetry with its

'are-those-video-or-computer-generated?' visuals.

GT3: A-Spec combines eye-popping looks with the exhaustive driving sim detailing and feel that the *GT* series has always fitted as standard.

*The full game hits the shelves in March. For now just watch, wait and read the preview on page 24.

I ROLLING DEMO FOUR

EA SPORTS MEDLEY

Publisher: EA Sports/Game types: Sports sims
Demo type: Rolling/Out: Various/Players: Various

THANKS TO CHAS and Dave, Jive Bunny and sequin-suited lounge singers the world over, the word 'medley' has taken a semantic pasting over the years. But no more. EA Sports have changed all of that with this lovingly prepared mixed grill of current and forthcoming titles. They are *Madden NFL 2001* (reviewed issue #01), *NHL 2001* (reviewed issue #02), *F1 Championship Season* (reviewed issue #03), *FIFA 2001* (reviewed issue #02), *Knockout Kings 2001* (previewed in issue #03), *NBA Live 2001* (preview on page 30) and *Tiger Woods PGA Tour Golf* (yet to be previewed). Think of it as a particularly action-packed edition of *Grandstand* distilled into a couple of minutes. Lovely.



extra

I VIDEO



EMOTION: WONDER

Publisher: SCEE

FORGET TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS and the insane press hoo-ha surrounding the launch of PS2. We already know the machine is special. But if you want to get a feel for what the Emotion Engine is capable of, look no further. More visual poem than promo, *Emotion: Wonder* is one of four mini-films showcasing PS2 through carefully selected images from its games (current and forthcoming) set against a goose bump-inducing soundtrack. Take a look, and feel good about the future.



postal

Your replies, requests, responses and rants...

Winner of the StarLetter each issue gets an exclusive Official PS2 Magazine T-shirt. Sadly, anyone else printed gets nowt – except, of course, the rare honour that is seeing their name in print in this fine tome. Although we are working on mugs. And maybe pens. Send those lovely letters to: Postal, Official PlayStation 2 Magazine, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Or email PS2@futurenet.co.uk. Get you writing now!



OPEN THE GATES OF HELL

I really do despair at the sheer incompetence of some of the mainstream media when it comes to videogames. How it is they can pass their blatant displays of uninformed and misguided waffle as Journalism, I don't know. Most of this is from 40-year-old TV presenters who wouldn't know that gaming had progressed past the age of Pong and Pac-Man never mind anything about PlayStation 2.

It made me sick to see a 'report' on the BBC news recently about PS2. Firstly it claimed that SCEE's pre-order scheme was farcical, as the only way to receive a machine was to reserve one in September. Well, I don't see how it is farcical to set up a scheme where something is in short supply is only given to the people who really want it and can be bothered to prepare in advance.

Someone from CTW [Computer Trade Weekly – Industry Ed] also appeared on the programme who was adamant that to pay £300 for "a games console" was insane. For someone at CTW to say that £300 is an exorbitant price for PlayStation 2 shocked me to say the least. £300 gets you the most powerful games console on Earth that is capable of playing PS2 games, has DVD movie playback, audio CD playback, backwards compatibility with peripherals (MultiTap aside) and the entire PSone back catalogue of games (with enhanced graphics and faster loading). And it's all future-proof via the USB, i-Link and planned Broadband connection to the internet. The cheapest DVD players are around £150 (going up to £600 and over) and to get the power of PlayStation 2 gaming in a PC, you would have to discover some sort of new technology, so I don't think the price of the PS2 is an issue.

As painful as it may be I would like to raise the issue of PS2's console competition – primarily Microsoft's Xbox. In my view SCEE is successful because the company is cool and appealed to a new young adult audience, something the Xbox will struggle to do. I only hope the Xbox is as good as the computer giant's Windows operating system, then it will crash every two minutes.

I respect and admire both Nintendo and Sega for the passion they have both have for the gaming industry and the tremendous games they have produced through the years. Nintendo's GameCube will be an amazing machine but it is only a games machine and is aimed at a much younger audience. This means the main battle is with Microsoft and I resent them essentially because Nintendo and Sega came into the business because they saw a gap in the market for quality games and games machines. Sony came into the business because they saw a gap in the market to bring gaming in to the mainstream and the living room. Microsoft didn't and never did see a gap in the market – they simply wanted to be in the business as a means of making money for themselves. If Microsoft wins this next generation console war it will be a case of money over matter and fake PR over quality, but respect is something you can't buy at Microsoft. So good luck Bill, you're going to need it.

Tom Chucki, Smallfield

A couple of good points there, young sirrah.

Firstly: Watching the mass media talk about videogames is indeed the audiovisual equivalent of your uncle funkydancing to Mos Def at a wedding reception. When even respected broadsheets can't spell the sodding name right ('Playstation2' as opposed to, well, you know) it makes you wonder just how seriously they're treating an entertainment medium that's worth more than the movie industry. There are a million things we could say about this but let's just summarise it in two words – 'Their loss'.

Secondly: Not for us is the popular sport that is console-bashing. To deny that 'rival' consoles have good games or even exist would be both churlish and, well, bloody stupid. Indeed, the OPS2 teamsters have over 25 consoles between them, including nine PlayStations, four Neo Geo Pockets, Lou's old MegaDrive and Fitz's Binatone madness. Like the N64 and Dreamcast before it, we're sure that Xbox will be very nice and have some good games. And like the N64 and Dreamcast, it'll be just how many good games it has that will make or break it.

HERE'S TO YOU, MRS ROBINSON

You want readers to write in with suggestions for TV shows to be made into a game? Well, I'm sure I'm not the first to think of this but how about *The Weakest Link*? Your opponents could be included as in the TV show but you'd get to 'chat' with them behind-the-scenes and offer bribes to vote off other characters. The questions could be in different difficulty categories, ranging from the amazingly easy Midday Money questions to the incredibly hard, 'Those With An IQ Under 5000 Need Not Apply' group.

The most important part of the game and what will undoubtedly sell millions of copies of the game is the Bonus mode. Once a player has won enough money – say £10,000 – then a new mode is unlocked, under the name of FoxHunter. In this mode, the game turns into a beat 'em up where the player chooses a weapon (for example, a stick with a rusty nail sticking through it) and then an arena, ranging from the BBC Studios to Anne's dressing room. Once the formalities are over with, you commence to beat the crap out of a defenceless Anne Robinson, shouting "You are the weakest link... GOODBYE" until the smirk has been wiped off her face! I rest my case.

Ben Waterworth, Via email

Ah, sweet is the reader letter that starts off all normal like and degenerates into eye-bleeding madness. That said, we've got a fiver on the ginger mistress to take on allcomers, naily stick or no naily stick. Harder than you AND SHE KNOWS IT!

LESS GAMES, MORE SEX

I've got your magazine and have a few comments.

(i) Putting just one game on your cover disc does not make it worthwhile if you've got that game. How about putting some other stuff on as well? The new PlayStation 2 advert by David Lynch would have been good, as would film trailers, music videos, episodes of *Battle Of The Planets*, in keeping with Issue #02's robot feature...

(ii) Are you a PS2 magazine or a videogames magazine? If a PS2 magazine, then how about more DVD and music reviews? I can't afford a new game all the time but I can afford a DVD once a month so to stop me buying two magazines, just give me more than one and a half pages of DVDs per month. Same goes for PSone reviews as well.

(iii) The Japanese section is cool. Keep it up.

If all you're going to cover in detail is videogames, then you're wasting your magazine. If any of your readers haven't got *TimeSplitters*, then why have they got a PS2? It's not as good as *GoldenEye* but then again neither is sex.

Daniel Hamilton, Via email

We've got your letter and have a few answers.

(i) A few answers here. (a) Despite our best efforts, the only playable demo available that month was Tekken Tag. The technical nature of the demo also meant that it had to be run by itself or not at all. Sorry. (b) Film trailers and music videos would take valuable space away from game footage – thus we'll only run these when we have the bigger storage capacity of a DVD. (c) Stop them presses! We're going to DVD a lot quicker than we originally thought – expect it around issue #06 or #07. (d) Only if we can put Keyop on the cover.

(ii) Let's put it to the vote. How does everyone else feel about this? Write and let us know.

(iii) Yeah, we dig it too. The Robo Crufts stuff is wack tho'.

NAPPY EVER AFTER

So, what exactly is the definition of false advertising? And more importantly, are Oddworld inhabitants guilty of it after supplying PlayStation magazines with screenshots for the upcoming *Munch's Oddysee* and then screwing us all by switching to the Xbox?

I own both previous Oddworld games, and was looking forward with much excitement to the next installment in the much promised Quintology. Yes, I'm disappointed, but more than anything I am angry. After telling us how powerful the PS2 would be, and how Munch would be a whole new experience, Lorne Cowdung [That'll be Lorne Lanning – Ed] now tells us that it is too hard to program for when it would be more honest for him just to admit that he sold out to Microsoft's millions.

I feel used, as I'm sure many editors or magazines do as well. Oddworld has used PlayStation 2 magazines (after all how many Xbox magazines are there) to build up the hype for the game and then desert us. The question is just when was the decision made to switch machines? Before or after the PlayStation 2 hype started. So I therefore appeal to OPS2 readers to:

1) Email the developer of Oddworld and tell them how disgusted you are with their behaviour.

2) Boycott buying any Oddworld games, or anything produced by their parent company.

And Sony? You gotta start playing it tough and nasty cos that's the way Microsoft are gonna play it.

Dave Marsdin, Via email

For the uninitiated, our Dave's talking about Oddworld's bizarre adventure that started life on PS2 (after two games on PSone) before defecting to Xbox. The game stars Abe and is an anti-corporate platform/adventure concerned with eco-conspiracy, big business-bashing and all-round world-saving. It was and probably still is top fun (your correspondent was lucky enough to play it at last year's E3) but before anyone starts shedding too many Mudoken tears, please remember two things. One, the hero wore a nappy, looked like a gimp, talked like a goblin and thus had his mouth stitched up. Two, never trust a hippy.

BATTLING TOTS

I've come up with a great idea for a new game called Tekken Toddlers. You would play as one of the characters - but as a baby! Say you were playing as Gun Jack. Instead of having a great huge robot, you would be playing as a sort of Mini-Me version of him. When they are in a fight, they could hit each other with rattles or something. If you were True Ogre, you could hatch from an egg at the start of the fight. If this were a game I would definitely go out and buy it.

Chris J Norman, Via email

"Hello? Namco? We've got this skill idea for a game with Eddy as a baby in Lycra pants and Paul as a nipper with a beard and Nina in nothing but a nappy and... Hello?" Chris, it's a superb brilliant idea but methinks we ain't pitched quite right...

YOU SAY POTATO, WE SAY 3/10

I had a PSone and really enjoyed it. I've now bought a PS2 and, like others, am awaiting GT3 and MGS2.

For some two years, I have faithfully laid out £5 a month for Official PlayStation Magazine, published by Future Publishing. I've relied completely on what I thought to be accurate and professional reviews. I now purchase OPS2 again for news, demos and reviews (again published by Future) but I think that your games

reviewers don't talk to each other.

I have spent many an hour merrily bashing Everybody's Golf 2 on PSone and I'm currently awaiting a true golf game on PS2 - I thought Swing Away Golf would be the one. However in OPM Issue #67, Swing Away Golf is given 9/10, saying "it's entertaining, full of tension and lovely to look at". But what do we read in OPS2? The review gives it 3/10, saying "it's heart-stoppingly, mind-wanderingly face-achingly dull". The reviewer pans the graphics, sounds, gameplay, presentation and just about everything else.

I am sure that the software houses also look to your magazine for favourable reviews (it's how they make money) as people like me rely on them. Please can you sort this out on future reviews. Oh, by the way, what is the true review score for Swing Away Golf?

Mark Williams, Via email

Reviews are a subjective business, Mark - different writers like different things, rewarding such seeming intangibles as spirit and vision as much as they do the graphics and length of gameplay. One thing that is for certain though is that people will never agree and whether we all work for Future Publishing or not, our minds remain our own. OPM liked it. We didn't. You lot get to read the arguments behind the scores and make up your own mind. ISS or FIFA? Blur or Oasis? Battleship Potemkin or Scary Movie? It's your choice, Mark - we're just here to help.

And Swing Away Golf? The PS2 version is rubbish compared to the PSone's superb original. Oh, and we were right.

SHOT IN THE ARK

Firstly, congratulations on your new magazine! Well laid out, fresh ideas, oodles of info., and great cover discs. Long may

your success continue!

Onto the topic in hand. I, along with a few other lucky people managed to get my PS2 before Christmas. Prior to this, all we had was pictures on the internet and magazines previews. Now, don't get me wrong, they looked great, but not that great - they looked somewhat blocky. Whenever I look at a picture of GT3, or the new screenshots of The Getaway, I can't help but focus on the 'rough' nature of the graphics. Even some of the screenshots of WRC2001 in issue #02 look like PSone shots! (Sarcastic overestimation there by the way!)

However, I do own TTT and SSX, and these both have fantastic smooth graphics that amaze me every time I play these games. What I want to know is, coming from guys who have played some of the newest games that are in development, do these games look blocky when you are playing them? I realise that a static

screenshot can't do a game justice, but some screenshots look worryingly lo-res! Are these close-ups? Whatever, I'm sure these new games will kick ass when they are launched!

Graham Potter, Hull

Screenshots are an arcane business - mags invest thousands (true) into the technology behind taking them but try as we might, nothing will ever look as good as the final game - even more, ahem, 'polished' screenshots provided by developers themselves. Suffice to say that we're working on new ways to grab in-game images - they used to have to take photos of the TV screen back in the day, y'know. Well, that's what Matt says. □

To be eligible for the StarLetter, remember to include your full name and address. OPS2 reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and style.

POSTAL EXTRA

Byte-sized chunks from the digital postbag

Clare Jenkins screams "AAAARRGHH WE WANT MUNCHEE!!!" beating around absolutely no bushes whatsoever. Looks like Dave Marsdin's email campaign has just got rolling... **Tim Peacock** meanwhile is standing up to watch TV these days. "Ever since Christmas Day, my wife and I have had to stand together in the kitchen to watch our favourite TV programmes on the little portable whilst our two boys relax on the sofa in the sitting room playing Ridge Racer V and Ready To Rumble 2 for hours on end on our new 24-inch pride and joy. First of all, be harsher with your offspring. Second of all, ignore what we just said and buy stools..." **Tom Angior** pleads: "Any chance of a Gran Turismo 3 demo? Pleeeeeaaaaaaaaaassssssseeeee!" Yes Tom,

Very soooooooooooooooooooooooooooooon. Haaaaaaaapy? Elsewhere, **Michael Farrel** demands: "All I want is to watch a crystal sharp movie in more than one colour and then blow three of my mates' heads off with a shotgun!" Michael is referring to the PS2's non-SCART playback and TimeSplitters. We dig the second option and will deal with the first - and all your other DVD queries - in a Q&A special next issue... Finally some PS2 evangelism from an up-beat **Matt Scholes**. "Everybody! Wake up and see what the machine you have (or desire) is. It's something to have some fun with, play films and listen to music on. Even my wife didn't frown too much when I got it, so it must be good." What better recommendation could there be than a lightly frowning wife? Um.

back issues

Want to get your hands on the issues people are discussing in Postal? Come raid our warehouse for issues you've missed. All issues feature playable demo discs.



ONE: 180 page launch issue with full PS2 guide, Tekken Tag review, Star Wars and more. Disc includes Wild Wild Racing, ISS and more.



TWO: Preview of Metal Gear Solid 2 plus WRC 2001, mech games, Project Eden report and more. Disc features playable Tekken Tag.



THREE: Exclusive report on Grand Theft Auto 3 plus Moto GP, F1 2001, Bemani and more. Disc has Dynasty Warriors 2 and NHL 2001.



FOUR: It's the issue you're holding in your hands now! To make sure you don't miss any issues, head to page 126 for our subs offer.

To order back issues of OPS2 write to Official PlayStation 2 Back Issues, Future Publishing, Cary Court, Somerton, Somerset, TA11 6TB, or call 01458 271184. Back issues are priced £5.99 (UK), £6.99 (Europe) and £7.99 (Rest of the World). Supplies limited.

WORDS: SAM RICHARDS

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The velvet rope is pulled aside for Square's frantic fist-fighting fantasy.

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THE BOUNCER

A trio of idle nightclub heavies are the unlikely heroes of this ambitious genre-bending PS2 debut from *Final Fantasy* overlord, Squaresoft.

Publisher: Square Europe
Developer: Squaresoft
Players: 1-4
Release: March

Q&A

TAKASHI TOKITA

The game's director Takashi Tokita trades a few blows with *OPS2*.



Why have you chosen to meld two game genres as seemingly disparate as the RPG and the free-roaming beat-'em-up?

It's important for an action game to give a feeling of oneness with the hero, but action games can sometimes lack characterisation and story development.

RPGs can cover these narrative factors but sacrifice the tempo, the thrill factor and the immediacy of the game in the process. *The Bouncer's* system is a combination of the best elements taken from these two genres.

What do you think is *The Bouncer's* single most impressive gameplay feature?

The ability to have multiple character versus multiple character combat in a 3D environment. Also, the ability to customise your characters freely is another big point.

How do you feel about being the first Squaresoft game to be released on PS2?

Square has not yet released its flagship title, *Final Fantasy X*. The chance to take initiative before such a game is a worthwhile challenge.



(Top) Branches of the story require you to take on enemies single-handedly.

(Above) Fracas in the FATE bar.



Survival mode is probably the least edifying of the three options available from the title screen, but it still provides much entertainment. Just attack each increasingly-adept enemy that approaches in order to progress and register that high score.

Prepare to be amazed. *The Bouncer* will floor you with its visual punch. Its graphical flair is unmatched by any game on any system ever and its near-future environment is perfectly realised. Character design is smart, stylish, and slyly humorous – as you'd expect from *Final Fantasy VIII* graduate Tetsuya Nomura – creating a cast of identifiable new PlayStation 2 heroes to brush aside the old guard attempting to relive past PSone glories.

Sadly, despite its epic sheen, *The Bouncer* may not be the fulfilling narrative-lead experience we crave. Essentially it's a story neatly constructed from gorgeous cut-scenes punctuated by enjoyable-but-messy free-roaming beat-'em-up sequences which sometimes seem to belong to a different game altogether. Great fun while it lasts but *The Bouncer* as yet fails to go down as a thoroughly satiating experience.

Part of *The Bouncer's* original appeal stems from a cross-pollination of gaming genres. The determination of Takashi Tokita and team to produce a new and unique gaming experience must be commended, but you're left wondering whether the end result might fall between two existing stools rather than pull a new one to the table. The scope and style of *The Bouncer's* opening movies suggests an adventure on a par with Squaresoft's flagship *Final Fantasy* series. It provides an intriguing, unusual tale, but you never quite feel you're going to be personally involved in the unfolding yarn. That's probably because you won't have much say in the direction that the adventure takes – gameplay segments require you to just batter a number of opponents before advancing to the next stage.

Nevertheless, developers could do well to learn from the construction of *The Bouncer's* story line and the cinematic way in which the opening sequence promises a drama unfolding on a universal scale, before zooming in on a tiny, scruffy bar named FATE. Here Sion Barzahd, Volt Krueger and Kou Lelfoh

WELCOME TO THE BOUNCER
THE BOUNCER
THE BOUNCER
THE BOUNCER
THE BOUNCER



Before every battle, you can select which of the three bouncers to control in combat. Choose wisely, my friend.

HUGE TUNEAGE

The Bouncer takes the importance of music in the videogame medium to a whole new level.



The Bouncer's immense immediate impact is a result of its sonics as well as its visuals. Two seasoned videogame soundtrack composers at Squaresoft – Noriko Matsueda and Takahito Eguchi – have scored reams of original music for the game in styles ranging from driving funk, to orchestral melancholy to offensive pop-metal drivel.

The game boasts two main themes. The first, entitled *Forevermore*, is a traditionally sentimental J-pop ballad sung by Reiko Noda with Japanese lyrics penned by *The Bouncer's* director Takashi Tokita. The second is a more soulful number called *Love Is The Gift*, sung by none other than American diva Shanice Wilson, the one-hit-wondergirl behind worldwide smash *I Love Your Smile*. Impressive, no?

PHOTOGRAPHY: RETNA



Inside Mikado, enemies include these sentient industrial hoovers. Dust-'em-up.



(Above left) Loading screens are used to give tantalising hints of the back story. (Above right) Use points earned in battle to build stats or buy special moves.



PREVIEW

THE BOUNCER

// The Bouncer's opening movies suggest an adventure on a par with Squaresoft's flagship Final Fantasy series //

are employed in the profession that lends the game its name. Frankly, the lack of patrons frequenting the FATE bar makes three security staff seem rather excessive. Still, if Sion, Volt and Kou aren't troubled by inebriated chancers on the doorstep, they're soon required to flex their collective muscle. FATE is invaded by a group of cool winged cyborgs, identified by Volt as Special Forces in the employ of the Mikado Group. Busting through the windows, they kidnap a mysterious young girl named Dominique Cross who's recently taken to hanging out at FATE and seems to hold a particular fascination for Sion. The Mikado Group is responsible for erecting a controversial satellite due to provide the earth with valuable microwave energy. This dubious plan suggests CEO Dauragon C Mikado harbours evil megalomaniac tendencies but it's not immediately clear what he wants. Prompted by Sion's libido (or true love for Dominique, depending on which way you slice it) the trio head to Mikado Towers.

The contrasting personalities of Sion, Volt and Kou satisfy the typical trio dynamic evident in every triangular task force from the *The Three Musketeers* to *Charlie's Angels*. Volt, with his horns and studs, is the deep-thinking muscle man with a heart of gold. Kou, tattooed to the max, is the rangy martial artist with a quip on his lips. Sion, short trousers denoting his novice status, is nimble and impulsive. The adventure seems to be played out largely through Sion's eyes since he is the least aware of Dauragon C Mikado's motivations at the outset. Volt and Kou both have mysterious pasts which are to be revealed throughout the game, intertwining with the unfolding narrative.

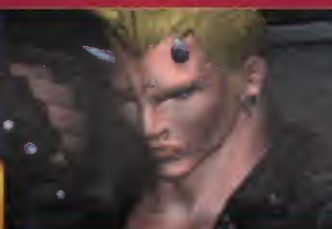
The story is cheesy in places and perhaps still a little too transparently Japanese despite obvious Hollywood aspirations, but it will undoubtedly transfix. The lush environments are populated by colourful villains, each with their own agenda. These include the glamorous Echidna, the psychotic Mugetsu and king ponce Dauragon C Mikado himself. In the course of

WHO'S WHO

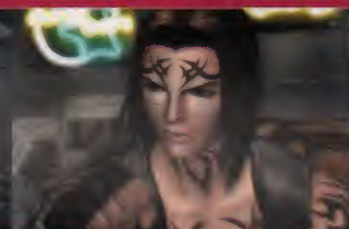
The Bouncer's movers and shakers revealed.



Sion Barzahn Teenage tough guy in the mould of Cloud and Squall whose stern façade crumbles when in the presence of Dominique. The real hero of the tale.



Volt Krueger Horns, piercings and outrageous turn-ups suggest Volt is the game's hardman, but he's a real deep thinker underneath. And what's his beef with Echidna?



Kou Leifoh The cheeky grin, floppy fringe and Maori-style tattoos mask a deep and mysterious history. The most enigmatic of the three FATE bar bouncers.



Dominique Cross The overtly cute 'princess' whose kidnapping kick-starts the whole adventure. But if Mikado wants her so badly, what's she hiding?

Eventually *The Bouncer* gives you an opportunity to launch a space craft.



(Above left) Sion protects Dominique. (Above right) A news report on the ominous Mikado satellite.



their adventure, the three bouncers get to jump trains, hijack aircraft and launch a space shuttle. Meanwhile, the back story is played out in grainy flashbacks and the blend of action, mystery and character development is expertly concocted.

It's telling that in pre-release showings, Squaresoft has concentrated on glorious cut-scenes and the intriguing story, rather than demonstrate the gameplay in action. It's not that *The Bouncer* plays poorly, just that it won't break new ground in the way promised by the thoroughly next-gen nature of the stylish graphics. Squaresoft affiliate Dream Factory is heavily involved in developing *The Bouncer's* gameplay mechanics, so it's no surprise to discover that the fights strongly resemble those of *Tobal* and *Ehrgeiz*, two PSone games previously conceived as a result of the Square/Dream Factory coupling.

STARTING OUT

A cut-scene will end with our heroes being challenged by a group of Mikado cronies. You are then able to select either Kou, Volt or Sion to control in the forthcoming battle. Each fighter has their strengths, encapsulated in four basic moves: high attack, middle attack, low attack and jump attack. The right top shoulder button blocks and the left top shoulder button allows special moves performed in conjunction with the basic attacks.

The ability to roam freely in the given arena adds another dimension to the bouts. Your colleagues fight alongside you with gratifying zeal, although the enemy AI isn't as impressive. Sometimes they will approach and attack you one by one, neglecting their group strength. However, the game encourages you to pile into several enemies at once, as toppling baddies in the manner of a domino rally is deeply satisfying and death blows of this kind are rewarded with a battle point multiplier.

It's also important to protect your fellow bouncers as they can help you defeat tenacious baddies, but once their health



Mugetsu Leader of the Mikado Special Forces, his robotic implants have enhanced his fighting skills but seemingly at the expense of his sanity...

Echidna Foxy fighting villainess in the employ of Mikado. Snakeskin miniskirts and a feather boa demonstrate a fashion sense as sharp as her tongue.

Kaldea Orchid Mysterious piano-playing femme imprisoned at Mikado Towers and prone to metamorphose into a panther at the slightest provocation.

Dauragon C Mikado CEO of the Mikado Group whose fancy cape and impressive fringe suggest a New Romantic outlook as well as tendencies to sinister megalomania.



(Above) Sadly you can't throw foes off the train.
(Below) Volt pummels a Mikado stooge.



Battles against the likes of leggy Echidna add a different dimension to Story mode gameplay.

PREVIEW

THE BOUNCER

Maybe the notoriety of their doorstaff – Sion, Volt and Kou – will encourage more punters to frequent the worryingly-empty FATE Bar on Dog Street.



gauges are exhausted, you're on your own. After each successful ruck, the character you've been controlling is awarded experience points which can be exchanged for additional health points, attack power or defence power. Alternatively they can be saved and used to buy additional special moves for the character. It soon becomes a matter of strategy whether you alternate the characters in battle, so building their statistics in tandem, or concentrate on turning one character into a super fighter and let the others go to hell.

The Bouncer is brilliantly simple to pick up and play, but there is inevitably a flipside. A certain primitivism is retained throughout and the bosses are worryingly easy to defeat. Bar brawls tend to be characterised by hapless participants slung across bottle-strewn tables, through plate glass windows and smashed over the head with various items of furniture. Sion, Volt and Kou were obviously wary of trashing their own place of work, because the FATE bar emerges from the first battle unscathed, as do all the game's fighting arenas.

It's also disappointing that there isn't more divergence in the game, where the three characters split and enjoy separate adventures. Even so, selecting one character regularly in battle, means you learn more about their history at the expense of the other two. The story is compelling enough to immediately restart the game on completion, and endure some hefty repetition to discover why Kou denounced his parental name.

GET THE MOVES

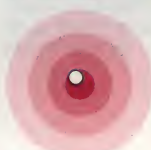
The intention that you replay the Story mode in order to unlock additional moves for the three bouncers or explore every branch of the narrative is central to the game. It's fair to say that successfully negotiating the Story mode for the first time will take less than two hours with probably only a couple of saved restarts required. Thankfully, there will be two additional modes to add value to *The Bouncer* experience.

Survival mode is mildly diverting. You can select any unlocked character and engage successive posers of adversaries in battle, clearing levels in the fastest time possible before you collapse. The incentive to post a high score keeps you going for a while but there's nothing here you won't encounter in Story mode. The real replay value of *The Bouncer* is promised by the two Versus modes which benefit from your labour in Story mode, allowing you to play unlocked characters or use the enhanced statistics of a character you have trained up. For more on Versus mode, see the 'Bring Da Ruckus' box.

First Impressions of *The Bouncer* is that it's flash and furious, but it shies away from long-term commitment. Currently, it's more of a statement of intent, an astounding trailer for what the PlayStation 2 is capable of rather than an end result in itself. But what we've seen of *The Bouncer* is enjoyable and frequently breathtaking. It leads the way in graphical splendour and proves that Squaresoft will remain a force to be reckoned with on PS2. Moreover it's going to cause debate among gamers who will either love it or hate it, making *The Bouncer* one of the most important games of 2001. □

ON TARGET? THE BOUNCER

Supremely stylish, but is it the genre-busting classic many are expecting from the Square stable?



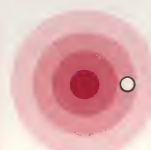
CUT-SCENES

There are a lot of these. Thankfully they all look amazing.



BROKEN NOSES

Plenty of enemies crawl home with bloody faces.



LONGEVITY

Brevity of the Story mode is a serious sticking point.

// The Bouncer is more a statement of intent, an astounding trailer for what the PlayStation 2 is capable of, rather than an end result in itself //

BRING DA RUCKUS

The Bouncer's replay value is greatly enhanced by two neat versus modes.



The Battle Royal is essentially one big reward for progress in the Story mode. If you complete the entire Story mode once, you unlock all 11 familiar arenas which range from the tight train roof to the expansive crystal dome in which you can climb the stairs and pretend to play the piano during the course of a bout.

Up to four human players can compete simultaneously, while those with fewer friends can opt for computer-controlled opponents instead. The more of the Story mode you explore, the more characters you unlock for use in Battle Royal (and this time you'll have to complete every branch of the adventure to collect the set). All the villains

become playable, sometimes in several different forms and naturally boast contrasting fighting styles to the three bouncers. Echidna favours capoeira-style moves while evil camp robot PD-4 wields a metal whip-chain. You can even play as Kaldea Orchid, one of whose special moves allows you to morph into a panther – a surprisingly effective technique when pitted against unprepared opponents. All improved statistics and additional moves obtained in the Story mode appear if you select either of the three bouncers in Battle Royal. However, this can make for uneven fights as health gauges are never equal. The Battle Royal undoubtedly makes for the best

simultaneous four-player beat-'em-up seen on a console, particularly when you throw in four vastly different fighting styles.

The inherent freneticism of mass brawls means that *The Bouncer's* Battle Royal is never going to rival *Tekken Tag* or *Dead Or Alive 2* for depth, but it's hilarious for a quick blast and a tactical strategy soon emerges. The other versus mode is entitled Team Battle. Two players can assemble three-man crews from the characters on offer, in order to rumble with the other team. Lack of finesse is certainly a problem here as a fight involving six characters exacerbates the niggles of the four-player fracas. Best to stick to Battle Royal.



Grainy Super-8 style cut-scenes are used to play out the tale of Dauragon C Mikado's shady beginnings.



Each bouncer has their own strength: Sion's punches are relatively weak, but he's incredibly nimble.

WORDS: STEVE MERRETT

GRAN TURISMO 3: A-SPEC

The wait is nearly over – GT3: A-Spec is nearly upon us. But before Polyphony Digital hand over the keys to their baby we took it for a quick spin. And what did we find? Just 150 cars, new tracks and, in an exclusive playtest, a stunning Rally mode. Oh yes.

Publisher: SCEE
Developer: Polyphony Digital
Players: 1-2 (up to 6 with i-Link)
Release: March

A week is a long time in politics, but a month is even longer in terms of game design – and the last four weeks have seen some major changes to *Gran Turismo 3*. As Polyphony tightens the last few nuts and performs one last oil change on the superior road racer,

major additions include confirmation of the game's Rally mode, a tweaked control system, and most significantly, a new name.

"As we worked on the game, we became more and more ambitious – we wanted to create a true sequel – a game that really is worthy of the title *Gran Turismo 3*," project leader Kazunori Yamauchi reasons. "*Gran Turismo* opened the world's eyes to the hidden power of PSone. With GT3, we'll pull off the same trick for the PlayStation 2." Thus, with GT3: A-Spec's March release looming and Yamauchi-san finally pleased with his latest racer, OPS2 can reveal the game's definitive specification list, and it makes for exciting reading. Some 150 cars with individually-tailored handling, 12 of which are still a secret, 15 circuits ranging from bustling cities to beautiful forests and compatibility with Sony's specially-developed Force Feedback steering wheel controller (see Taking The Wheel).

GT3: A-Spec boasts three rally circuits which all demonstrate the versatility of the final game. While the off-road sequences may not have the ambition of Evolution Studio's forthcoming WRC 2001, they throw up a host of new challenges and leave any other dedicated rally title eating dust. The real beauty of these stages is that they offer a direct contrast to the game's road races. Cars tear around muddy circuits, throwing up splatters of mud or clouds of dust, while a tree canopy above creates stunning effects as shards of light filter through.

Adding to the overall effect, the Dual Shock 2 controller shakes and rumbles as cars speed over potholes and uneven shale tracks, while Polyphony's audio expertise is showcased as the sound of crunching gravel and over-revved engines is realised in full stereo.

TAKING THE WHEEL

In readiness for GT3's March debut, Sony is lining up a force feedback steering wheel to accompany the game's release.



Plugging into the PlayStation 2's USB port, the wheel and accompanying pedals are analogue-based to ensure they reflect the responsive natures of *Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec*'s many cars. More exciting, however, is the promise offered by combining the unit with the game's i-Link mode. Just picture the scene: three PlayStation 2s, three TVs and six players each with a wheel of their own – who needs the arcades?



Here they are. World exclusive shots of GT3: A-Spec's amazing Rally mode.

It's not just the aesthetic details that have been improved. Rally drivers are without the 'Drift' mode that makes cornering so effortless, in the asphalt conditions of the game's new Tokyo and Monte Carlo courses. Rallying is a constant battle against the elements, with muddy banks hemming the player in and forcing them to reconsider over-taking manoeuvres, while shale and mud conspire to create treacherous conditions, demanding genuine skill on the player's part. Even the cars throw up a few surprises, with the Rally mode's garishly-decorated Subarus offering subtle control differences over the Hondas and Peugeots of the main game. They're heavier but also more resistant to skidding, which makes them much more fun to throw around the narrower tracks. We've played this Rally mode to death and believe us when we say, it's a game on its own

SO MUCH FUN

And this is the key to *GT3: A-Spec* – it's fun. Strip away the stats, photo-realistic graphics and true-to-life sound effects and you still have a racer that's firing on all cylinders. The beautifully-judged handling steers the game more into arcade territory than serious simulation, but when you're driving a £200,000 Paganì Zonda C12 at 200mph, do you want to be piddling around with complicated controls? Of course not. Despite Yamauchi's initial worries that the game was just a graphically-enhanced version of its PSone predecessors, *GT3: A-Spec* is more than this. Much more. Control over the cars benefits from roughly 25 percent more sensitivity than past *Gran Turismo* titles, and it results in a more fluid driving experience. Instead of battling around corners, analogue sticks allow graceful steering and subtle movements are enough to coax the most high-powered vehicles around a hairpin bend. Similarly, fans of manual gear options will find that the gear changes are easier to effect during the course of a race.

But, of course, *GT3: A-Spec* wouldn't be a Polyphony game if it didn't delight in detail – and full credit goes to the team for



It might only have three tracks, but this level of detail makes Rally mode a game in its own right.



The Subaru Impreza is one of many cars you will be able to drive round the gruelling, dust- and mud-filled rally courses.



SUPERIOR BEINGS

The AI of *GT3*'s drivers marks a massive step forward for the game.



The CPU-controlled racers stick to a strict racing line, but also have the nous to cut the player up and prevent them overtaking. Such intelligence is particularly welcome within multiplayer games, with the CPU cars judging the player's expertise and adjusting their racing styles accordingly.

PREVIEW

GRAN TURISMO 3: A-SPEC

// The key to GT3: A-Spec is that it's fun. Strip away the stats, graphics and sound effects and you still have a brilliant racer //



metropolitan behaviour beyond the call of duty. The engine sounds, far from being incredibly similar, have actually been recorded from each of the cars by Yamauchi himself. Although such praise has been lavished on the graphics, it's not until you race through a dusky European location with the sun casting a gentle orange pallor does the effectiveness of the game's appearance come to the fore. Light bounces off car bonnets, shadows crawl across the streets while assorted dust and mud effects are simply brilliant. It would be nice if you could see a dent or scratch on your £150,000 motor after slamming into a fence, but understandably the car manufacturers were adverse to having their beautiful machines beaten up for the game.

Make no mistake, GT3: A-Spec will be the first 'must-have' PS2 title. Yamauchi's quest for perfection has resulted in a perfectly judged racer, where every element works well together. The game's sumptuous visuals will draw most people in, but it's the delicate balance between realism, immediacy and that crucial gameplay that will keep you glued to your PlayStation 2. Next month, we'll bring you the world-exclusive review of Polyphony's ace racer, with a fully-playable demo planned for the very near future. Start your engines now... □

ON TARGET?

GRAN TURISMO 3: A-SPEC

With Yamauchi's eye for detail GT3: A-Spec elevates the racing genre to a dizzying new level.



GRAPHICS: Stunning car models, and some awe-inspiring backdrops.



HANDLING: Analogue sticks allow delicate but effective steering.



SOUND: Differences in engine roars are surprisingly and subtly varied.

WHAT REVS OUR ENGINE

The game the PS2 was made for? Most definitely, here we take you over some of the finer aspects that really got us excited.



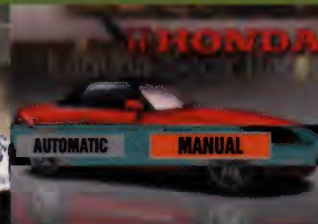
Rally mode Subtle control differences make this ostensibly a game within a game with heavier cars and narrow courses.



Lighting effects GT3: A-Spec shows exactly why you bought a PS2. Amazing sunsets, dappled light effects and supershiny cars. That'll do for us.



Drifting Slide around those corners without sacrificing your speed. This is the essential driving tool of the Gran Turismo connoisseur.



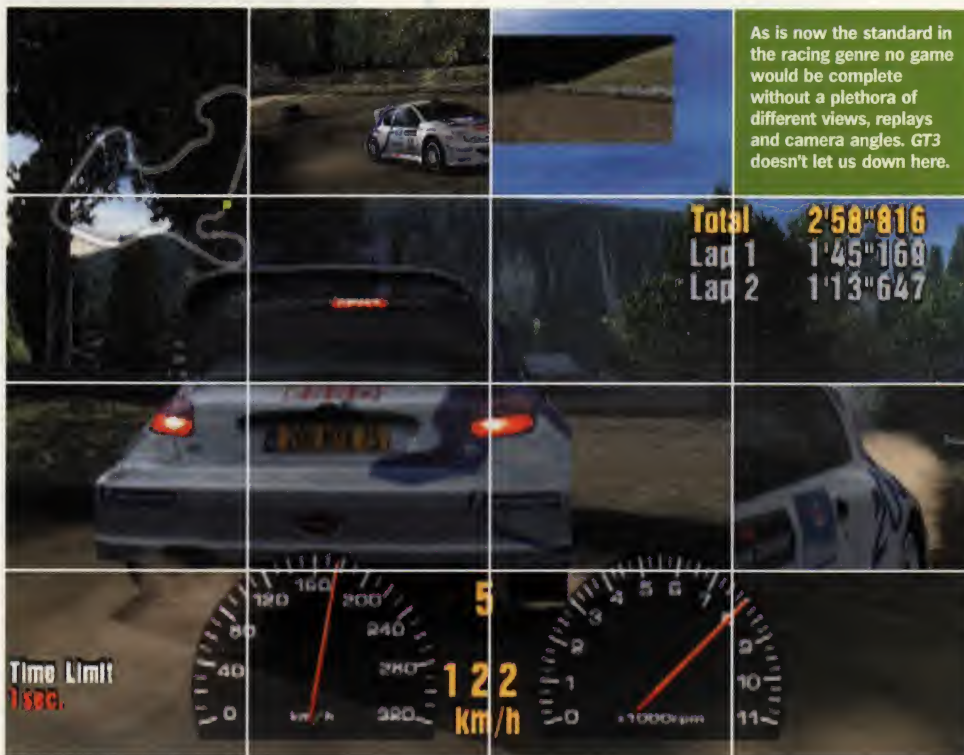
Manual gears Practise makes perfect, but GT3: A-Spec shifts up a gear when the player makes the brave move from automatic to stick shift.



Analogue control Beautifully sensitive, with the slightest movement deftly moving the car. Only the dedicated wheel does it better.



(Below and left) Latest developments at Polyphony include the sublime weather effects utilised for this brand-new Tokyo track.



So do you follow the racing line, or try and overtake them?



You might have seen these already near-legendary shots before – it's that light through the trees mountain level.



Flip smoothly between cars in the Replay mode.



The on-screen display – map, time, position, speed.

GT3: A-SPEC – THE GARAGE

No	Manufacturer	Car Name	Grade	Year
1	Daihatsu	Storia	X4	1998
2	Daihatsu	Mira	TR-XX Avanzato R	1997
3	Honda	Accord	Euro-R	2000
4	Honda	Raybrig NSX		2000
5	Honda	Castrol Mugen NSX		2000
6	Honda	Arta NSX		2000
7	Honda	NSX	Type S Zero	1997
8	Honda	NSX	Type R	1992
9	Honda	S2000	Type Y	2000
10	Honda	S2000		1999
11	Honda	Integra	Type R 98 Spec	1998
12	Honda	Civic	Type R (EK)	1998
13	Honda	Civic	SIR-II (EG)	1993
14	Honda	CR-X Del-Sol	SIR	1995
15	Honda	Diablo	GT Car	2000
16	Mazda	RX-7	Type RS	1998
17	Mazda	RX-7	Type RZ	2000
18	Mazda	Savanna RX-7	Infini II (FC)	1990
19	Mazda	Eunos Roadster	Normal	1989
20	Mazda	Eunos Roadster	Normal	1993
21	Mazda	Roadster	1.8 RS	1998
22	Mazda	Roadster	RS	2000
23	Mazda	Demio	GLX	1999
24	Mitsubishi	FTO	GP Version R	1997
25	Mitsubishi	GTO	Twin Turbo	1995
26	Mitsubishi	GTO	Twin Turbo	1999
27	Mitsubishi	Lancer	Evolution IV GSR	1996
28	Mitsubishi	Lancer	Evolution V GSR	1998
29	Mitsubishi	Lancer	Evolution VI GSR	1999
30	Mitsubishi	Lancer	Evolution VI GSR	2000
31	Mitsubishi	Lancer	Tommi Makinen Edition	2000
32	Mitsubishi	Lancer	Evolution VI GSR (Stripe)	2000
33	Mitsubishi	Lancer	Evolution VII Rally Car	1999
34	Nissan	Silvia Varletta		2000
35	Nissan	Skyline	GTS-t Type M (R32)	1991
36	Nissan	Skyline	GT-R V-Spec II (R32)	1994
37	Nissan	Skyline	GT-R V-Spec (R33)	1997
38	Nissan	R390 GT1	LM Race Car	1998
39	Nissan	R390 GT1	Road Car	1998
40	Nissan	Skyline	GT-R V-Spec (R34)	1999
41	Nissan	Skyline	GT-R V-Spec II (R34)	2000
42	Nissan	Pennzoil Nismo GT-R	GT	1999
43	Nissan	Silvia	K's 2000cc (S13)	1991
44	Nissan	Silvia	K's 1800cc (S13)	1988
45	Nissan	Silvia	K's Aero (S14)	1996
46	Nissan	Silvia	Spec R (S15)	1999
47	Nissan	180SX	Type X	1996
48	Nissan	Locette Zexel	GT	2000
49	Nissan	Calsonic Skyline	GT	2000
50	Nissan	Fairlady Z	Version S2 seater	1998
51	Subaru	Impreza	WRX STi	2000
52	Subaru	Impreza	Sports Wagon STi	2000
53	Subaru	Impreza	Rally Car	1999
54	Subaru	Impreza	Coupe 22B STi Version	1998
55	Subaru	Impreza	Sedan WRX STi Version VI	1999
56	Subaru	Impreza	WAGON WRX STi Version VI	1999
57	Subaru	Impreza	Rally Car Prototype	2001
58	Subaru	Legacy B4	RSK	1998
59	Subaru	Legacy B4	Blitzen	2000
60	Subaru	Legacy	Touring Wagon GT-B	1996
61	Suzuki	Alto Works	Suzuki Sports Limited	1997
62	Tommykaira	ZZS	GT-S	1999
63	Toyota	MR2	GT-S	1998
64	Toyota	MR2	G-Limited	1998
65	Toyota	Corolla	Rally Car	1999
66	Toyota	Sprinter Trueno	GT-APEX (AE86 Type I)	1985
67	Toyota	Sprinter Trueno	GT-APEX (Shigeno Version)	
68	Toyota	MR-S	S Edition	1999
69	Toyota	Autobacs Apex MR-S	GT	2000
70	Toyota	Celica	SS-II	1999
71	Toyota	Supra	RZ	1997
72	Toyota	Supra	SZ-R	1997
73	Toyota	Castrol Tom's Supra		2000
74	Toyota	Denso Sard Supra		2000
75	Toyota	Altezza	RS200	1998
76	Toyota	Altezza	AS200	1998
77	Toyota	GT-One (ITS020)	Race Car	1999
78	Toyota	GT-One (ITS020)	Road Car	1999
79	Toyota	Vios	Euro Edition	2000
80	Toyota	Vitz	RS 1.5	2000
81	Toyota	Celica	GT-Four (ST205)	1995
82	Acura	CL	3.2 Type S	2000
83	Acura	NSX		1993
84	Acura	NSX		1997
85	Acura	Integra	Type R	1996
86	Chevrolet	Corvette	Grand Sport	1996
87	Chevrolet	Corvette	Z28	1997
88	Chevrolet	Corvette	Z06	2000
89	Chevrolet	Camaro	SS	2000
90	Chevrolet	Corvette	C5R	2000
91	Chrysler	PT Cruiser		2000
92	Dodge	Viper	GTS-R Team Oreca	2000
93	Dodge	Viper	GTS	1998
94	Ford	Focus	Rally Car	1998
95	Ford	Escort	Rally Car	1998
96	Ford	Mustang	SVT Cobra R	2000
97	Ford	GT40	Race Car	1969
98	Ford	GT40		1966
99	Shelby	Cobra		1967
100	Alfa Romeo	156	Super Turismo	2000
101	Alfa Romeo	156	2.5 V6 24V	1999
102	Aston Martin	DB7	Vantage Coupe	2000
103	Aston Martin	V8 Vantage		1997
104	Audi	S4		1999
105	Audi	TT	1.8T Quattro	2000
106	BMW	328ci		1999
107	Citroen	Xsara	Rally Car	1999
108	Fiat	Coupe	Turbo Plus	2000
109	Gillet	Vertigo	Race Car	1997
110	Jaguar	XK8	Road Car	1992
111	Jaguar	XKR	Coupe	1999
112	Lister	Storm V12	Race Car	1999
113	Lotus	Esprit	SPORT 350	2000
114	Lotus	Elise	190	1998
115	Lotus	Motor Sport Elise		1999
116	Mercedes-Benz	CLK55		2000
117	Mercedes-Benz	CLK600		2000
118	Mercedes-Benz	SLK	230 Kompressor	1999
119	Opel	Calibra	Touring Car	1995
120	Pagani	Zonda		2000
121	Pagani	Zonda	CL2S	2000
122	Peugeot	206	S16	1999
123	Peugeot	206	Rally Car	1999
124	Renault	Clio Sport	V6 24V	2000
125	Renault	Clio Sport	Race Car	2000
126	RUF	RUF 3400S		2000
127	RUF	RUF R-GT		2000
128	RUF	RUF CTR2		1999
129	TVR	Tuscan	Speed 6	2000
130	TVR	Griffith	500	1998
131	TVR	Speed 12		2000
132	Vauxhall	Astra	DTM Team Phoenix	2000
133	Vauxhall	VX220		2000
134	Vauxhall	Calibra	DTM	1995
135	Volkswagen	New Beetle		2000
136	Volkswagen	New Beetle	RSI	2000
137	Volkswagen	New Beetle	Cup Car	2000
138	Volkswagen	Lupo	Cup Car	2000

*138 cars named and only 12 to go... See next issue for the world-exclusive review of Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec for the rest – and so much more.

KENGO

WORDS: STE CURRAN

Kengo: the ancient art of hitting people with sharp things, while avoiding being hit oneself.

Developer: Light Weight
Publisher: Ubi Soft
Players: 1-2
Release: April

Though not officially a sequel to Square's 1998 cult hit *Bushido Blade*, *Kengo* follows firmly in that game's tradition of precision blade-wielding, rather than the furious button-bashing of, say, *Soul Blade*. *Bushido Blade* really stood out thanks to the lack of a energy bar – one hit and you were dead – but now the inscrutable developer has chosen to go in a different direction.

Let us explain. *Bushido Blade* was loved because it was a sword-fighting game that played by real-world rules – a critical blow was a critical blow, regardless of how the fight had been going up until that point. How could you ever relax if you knew that you were always just one blow away from death? You couldn't. All you could do was watch was your opponent, counter, wait for that essential opening and then go for the kill. *Bushido Blade* was tense, glorious and sadly only a minor hit on PSone, its sequel not even earning a UK release.

Fast forward a couple of years and, since splitting from Squaresoft, the ex-*Bushido* team (now renamed Light Weight) are serving up *Kengo*. Thematically, its 18th Century Japanese setting reveals a similar game to their previous efforts, but a few differences are obvious – namely the introduction of some decidedly un-*Bushido* life bars and two main modes.

The first is the standard one-on-one slash-'em-up mode, but the subtlety comes with the second mode, a kind of career mode for would-be duellers. One of three trainee fighters is selected, as is a place of study and it's the player's job to school them – via sub-games – in each of the six trainable stats: power, speed, agility, insight, spirit and fame.

Once trained, performing brutal hits on your opponent really couldn't be simpler. One button controls attacks and another button executes a basic neutralising block. The four shoulder buttons alter your character's stance, which in turn affects the moves executed by pressing the strike button. There's also a parrying button that will kick your opponent

DOJO KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

Those wishing to master the true art of Kengo must first seek a home...



Venue One

This charming hilltop residence offers spacious comfort in the midst of stunning countryside surroundings. Thanks to an atmospheric anomaly, it's always dusk here, which makes it the perfect residence for seasonal romantics.



Venue Two

An ancient and highly desirable stone villa, potential residents might wish to take advantage of the sporting facilities offered in the walled courtyard. The stylish peaked roof provides maximum protection against the dramatic weather.



Venue Three

What could a discerning dojo-buyer seek more than a hidden palace in the woods? This gorgeous construction is walled by a variety of towering local flora. Would-be owners should be aware of the conceivably fatal resident wildlife, too.



Parrying can result in an eyeball-to-eyeball test of strength. Win it and your opponent will fall over.



Energy bar or no energy bar, that has got to hurt.



Success means taking every chance.



A magical spirit tries to hit you.

away, and another one that raises your Ki level, essential to pulling off the ultra-powerful critical hits. Analogue control is also cleverly executed, with sharp pushes of the stick causing your fighter to dive, roll and charge the opponent.

The simple one-attack-button control system might shock veteran fighters, but it's a deliberate move to steer Kengo's dynamic away from that of a typical beat-'em-up.

Since the fighting in Kengo takes place in fully 3D arenas, aligning your player with your opponent in order to beat him senseless is absolutely necessary and often very difficult, sometimes to the point of being irritating. Devastating thrusts will miss by inches, leaving you wide open to mortally wounding strikes from the enemy.

Beat-'em-up purists won't like it, but it doesn't matter. It's there, and whatever its advantages, most players will ultimately find themselves watching that life bar as much as watching their opponent. The change might not be a critical blow to Kengo's chances of greatness, but it's definitely a distraction from the all-consuming atmosphere of *Bushido Blade*. Suave and stylish it might be, but whether Kengo can win the public's adoration with such zen combat alone is open to question. □

ON TARGET? KENGO

With the exception of the odd reappearance of the energy bar, Kengo looks like it's going to satisfy people's expectations in all areas.



STYLE
Gentlemen's fighting. Compelling light-footed aggression.



IMPACT
Blocking is great, but attacking has a paler feel to it.



SUB-GAMES
Wildly hitting buttons whilst beneath a raging waterfall? Yes!

WAVE 399
THE NEW AGE

2000 FIGHT
INNOVATION

THE NEW AGE
OF FIGHTING

THE NEW AGE
OF FIGHTING

THE NEW AGE
OF FIGHTING

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SUB-GAME ADVANCEMENT

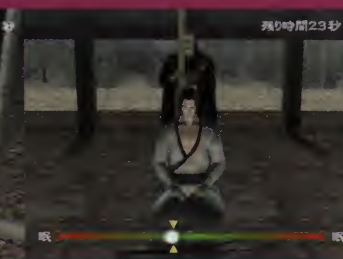
Boosting your stats in the single-player mode means excelling in the many superb sub-games.



Hitting Wood
Follow the signals at the top of the screen, and break the wood in a rhythm-action style.



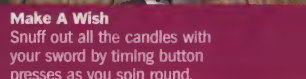
Water Games
Punch buttons wildly then run out of energy, before collapsing beneath a sparkling waterfall. Fantastic.



Bamboo Shooting
Here you can use combos to chop down as many bamboo stalks as possible within a time limit.



Trance Concentration
Meditate by balancing the bar at the bottom - don't let it slide too far one way, or the monk will hit you.



Make A Wish
Snuff out all the candles with your sword by timing button presses as you spin round.



Concentration is the key (even in the FMV).



Training means fighting with wooden sticks. They still hurt, though.

WORDS: JOÃO DINIZ SANCHES

NBA LIVE 2001

Another month, another issue. Must be time for a 'new' game from EA, then. Oh, hello, here's the fellow. Basketball? Why not...?

Publisher: EA Sports
Developer: EA Sports Canada
Players: 1-4
Release: February

There's a reassuring familiarity when you load up an EA game. Whether you think this is good or not, you can't deny that almost everything that survives the publishing giant's production line excels in the presentation department. If gameplay was based on production values alone, EA would be undisputed king of the videogames court.

NBA Live 2001 is no different. That's 'no different' in terms of maintaining EA's quality of presentation, you understand, not a comparative reference to the six previous NBA outings. There are, after all, some new moves. But most of the innovation centres around the game's aesthetic and aural merits, particularly the amount of impressive cut-scenes in-between plays as players congratulate each other, and before and after quarters as teams hang around their respective benches.

Another neat touch is the way you can hear a player's reaction to a particular incident – for example, he may argue the decision with the ref, at which point his coach may also get involved. Though not new, the crowd responds according to the on-court action, and for once they are decently animated too (even if there seem to be a frightening amount of grey jumpers occupying the first three rows). It's encouraging to see the developer is keen to improve the atmosphere of its product by focusing on areas other than the usual suspects.

And it works, too. Essentially, the overall sense of realism is conveyed in an unusually convincing manner. At times, it's like becoming involved in a real basketball game – the players can come across as surprisingly human, which can feel oddly eerie for the first few matches. But that's only in the cut-scenes, because in play, things are a little less lifelike. The individual animations are fine, with players running around, jumping, dunking and spinning their way past the opposition with the flair and agility you associate with NBA stars. But when one sequence links with the next, things go all jerky. It hardly affects play, but it does make the action look disappointingly

LIGHTS! CAMERA! ACTION...

Graphical flair abounds in the cut-scenes. It's what we've come to expect from EA Sports...



1. As the starting quintet hit the court, anyone left over takes a seat by the sidelines and supports team members by shouting encouraging remarks. In a novel twist, NBA Live 2001 includes commentary from team members, adding to the authenticity.

2. After each quarter, the team returns to the bench, to be greeted by the subs who have spent the last 15 minutes (real-time or not) nervously watching the game from the sidelines. Why not make their day by letting them participate in the next session?

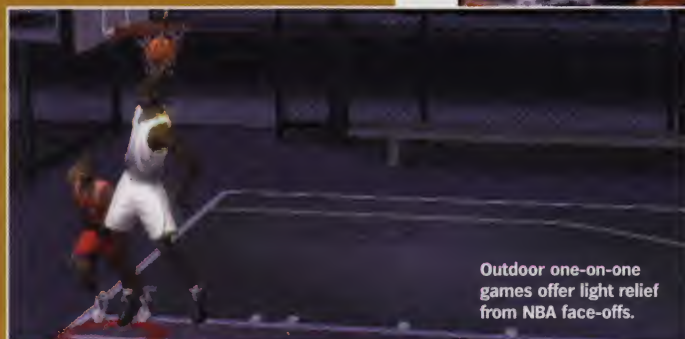


3. At the start, you're treated to a sequence involving players from the opposing teams sportingly shaking hands. Although, this doesn't guarantee the subsequent proceedings will go without incident.



4. If a foul occurs, the fouled player gets a couple of shots at the basket without having to worry about someone waving and jumping in front of him. Team mates encourage him by clapping their hands. Nice.

Graphical detail, while not spectacular, is evident throughout, with players' expressions altering to match the on-screen events.



Outdoor one-on-one games offer light relief from NBA face-offs.

spasmodic, particularly when you take into account the fluidity displayed by the cut-scene sequences.

But maybe that's something EA is planning to smooth out before the launch. Certainly, from a gameplay perspective, there's little else it needs to do. Simulation mode delivers a basketball game as close to reality as you could want, with all the rules and regulations the keenest follower could demand. If that makes the experience too sober for some, there's always the option to play in the more humane arcade setting. In this, you can dribble outside the court boundaries, pass the ball backcourt and push over the opposition, without suffering a penalty. Sure, it's still a decisive three pointer away from the non-stop madness of *NBA Jam*'s two-on-two action for the PSone, but it makes things more enjoyable for those who feel it necessary to break a few rules. And if you still feel that's too formal, there's always the one-on-one game, although sadly no two-on-two option is planned.

So, other than dubious loading times and some animation glitches, on current form things are looking promising. Owners of previous *NBA Live* titles may find this 128 bit makeover a little overfamiliar. But hey, when has that ever bothered EA? □

ON TARGET? NBA LIVE 2001

Competent and certainly comprehensive interpretation of basketball, with a genuinely authentic feel. Some may feel it lacks vitality.

GRAPHICS A little angular and clinical, but generally of a high standard.	PLAYABILITY Plays a solid game of basketball. Nothing more, nothing less.	ORIGINALITY Doesn't do anything significantly different from previous titles.



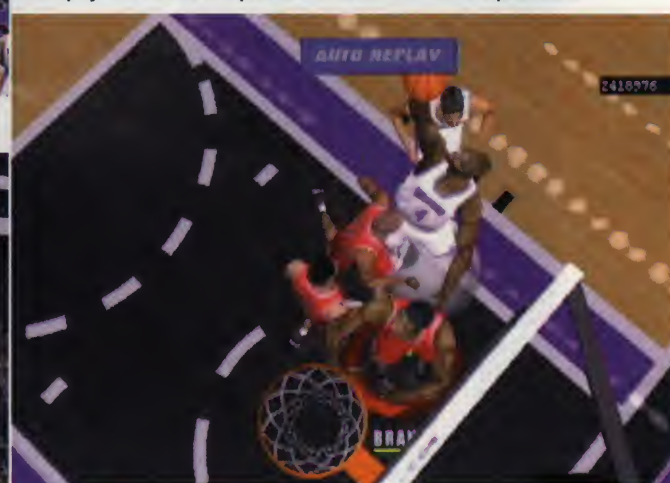
Action is a little jerky, but animation is pleasingly correct.



Expect certain players to display their signature dunking moves at the push of a button.



The replay mode offers comprehensive control over camera placement.



VIEW ME 00

Those in-game camera angles in full

ORLANDO MA

The 'Follow' view option ensures your back is always turned to the camera.

The overhead cam feels odd – those with a penchant for 2D will love it, though.

In addition to the classic isometric view, the action can be displayed side on...

...and, of course, the amount of zooming can always be altered to suit your taste.

KLONOA 2: LUNATEA'S VEIL

WORDS: BEN LAWRENCE

The PS2 is yet to witness a spectacular platformer, but that could be about to change – 2D gaming is making a return...

Publisher: TBC
Developer: Namco
Players: 1
Release: Fourth quarter 2001

The most advanced console of our time is causing a ruckus on foreign shores, ready to unleash a tsunami of the most sophisticated games ever produced, and yet, in the middle of it all, miaowing for attention, is a small black and white cat. With big floppy ears. In a hat. Does this meek-looking feline really stand a chance against the colossal torrent of games currently in development? Yes. In fact, you're looking at an evolution in 2D gaming.

Klonoa 2: Lunatea's Veil is the cat's second adventure – the first being a great success on the PSone. The game won't be out until near the end of the year, but it already looks good. The story sees our feline hero sucked into the realm of Lunatea and plunged into a storm-lashed ocean. He wakes up on a beach, and is found by Lolo, an apprentice priestess, who will accompany him through his adventures. However, all is not well in Lunatea. The four bells that maintain an orderly realm are being threatened by an evil fifth bell, which will disrupt life as the Lunatean's know it. Lolo believes that Klonoa is the realm's saviour and convinces him to help restore order in what would appear to be the well-trodden route of a 2D platformer.

The cell animation of the lead characters on 3D backgrounds pushes back the confines of the 2D genre (although in the past it hasn't always met with success: *Hologram Time Traveler* anyone?) The game is rendered like an old-style cell cartoon, and provides a perfect example of how the boundaries of 2D characters and 3D environments can merge successfully. If Klonoa skis down a mountain, the perspective is in the third person. Should the perspective of the action suddenly change (whether to his side or to witness him tumbling down a crevasse) the camera angle will instinctively shift to view what Klonoa sees, while he maintains his 2D form.

Highlights of the game include a scene where the hero is thrown into the sky in a shower of pseudo 3D sparks, illuminated in the most brilliant lighting effects – something

KLONOA'S ARK Who's who in Lunatea.



Klonoa
Part cat, part genetic experiment, and armed with a magical ring, our cock-sure hero uses a combination of athleticism and sorcery skills to combat Lunatea's evil.



Lolo
A trainee priestess, Lolo rescues Klonoa and sets him on his path with destiny. She will act as Klonoa's guide through Lunatea, should he encounter any difficulties.



Popka
Popka is Lolo's dopey assistant. He resembles a rag doll, and as we haven't witnessed him in the game yet, it may mean he serves as much use as said fabric toy. Hmm.



It may be a 2D platformer, but that doesn't stop our Klonoa diving from tall 3D buildings. What a crazy world this is.



that *Fantavision* would be proud of. But the most stunning footage we've seen so far is of Klonoa running around the base of a huge 3D tower as it explodes around him. While remaining distinctly *PaRappa* in looks, he seamlessly blends with the background, as chunks of debris whistle past his flimsy 2D body.

Despite its animated 3D world, *Klonoa's* controls are faithful to the PSone game – much left-to-right action. All 24 levels are inhabited with creatures that give the game oodles of jest, which require just two control buttons to defeat. This won't hinder *Klonoa's* progress or the gameplay; he'll still be able to utilise his crippled enemies, grabbing them with his magical ring and hurtling them, legs flailing and limbs outstretched, into other bad guys. He can bounce off them after inflating them with special bullets and even use them as stepping stones to reach bonuses and higher platforms.

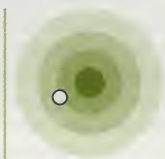
Facts about this step into the 2D realm are still sketchy, and how *Klonoa* will play remains a mystery but, rest assured, the likes of Namco do not delve into such waters without having something up their sleeves. You could be looking at something very special indeed. SCEE picked up the last *Klonoa*. We think they'd be wise to nab this one as well... □

ON TARGET?

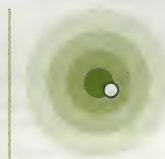
KLONOA 2 LUNATEA'S NEIL
Solid and animated with razor precision, *Klonoa 2* is looking extremely accomplished already. It's bright, breezy and instantly likeable.



VIBRANCY
Oodles of it. Colourful, cheery and pleasing to the eye.



ORIGINALITY
Mmm... seen it before, but maybe not to this standard.



WHISKERS
Ah, ain't he just the cutest. How could fail to love this creature?



Using his magical ring, Klonoa can reach otherwise impossible heights.



Those white arm-like things protruding from Klonoa aren't actually his arms. They're his ears.



A 2D character in a virtual world adds interest.



If you capture a bad guy, you can use him to help you fly.



KITTY KITTY BANG BANG

Klonoa goes motorbike crazy.



If you can't wait to get your mitts on *Klonoa 2*, then check out Namco's ace racer *Moto GP*. If you enter, and successfully complete challenge 14 in the Challenge mode, you will be duly rewarded with your very own bike-riding moggy. Miaow etc...

* Further cheats for all the latest PS2 games can be found in the lovely Mr Fitz's Hardcore section on pages 134-139.

COOL BOARDERS: CODE ALIEN

WORDS: RYAN BUTT

Brace yourself for a close encounter of the coolest kind – the oldest snowboarder in the business is back for PlayStation 2.

Publisher: TBC
Developer: UEP Systems
Players: 1-2
Release: Fourth quarter 2001

The PlayStation 2 has only been out five minutes and it's already got more snow than a Rolling Stones backstage party. Taking centre stage on its alpine slopes is undoubtedly EA's sublime SSX game, but now it's time to wrap up warm and take to the piste again with the oldest boarder on the slopes – *Cool Boarders* is back.

Released in Japan back in December, *Code Alien* falls somewhere between the outrageous extravagance of *SSX* and the serious sim approach of Konami's *ESPN Winter Games X-Boarding*, and is broken down into three different and enjoyable gameplay modes.

In Extreme mode, players are invited to hack down a series of tricky courses as quickly as possible. Bonus points are awarded for any tricks you pull off en route, but the main focus is purely on time. Trick mode is a straightforward freestyle event in which the onus is on gravity-defying stunts that the player can achieve via a series of ramps and halfpipes. Finally, Trick Master mode takes place on a vast slope consisting of ramp after ramp, the idea being to practise each and every one of the tricks in sequence. Other features include a fantastic Board Park mode in which players can shred along rails, cabin roofs and half-buried cars.

Cool Boarders: Code Alien features seven standard boarders, from Sonic-haired Offspring-lookalikes to the token chicks. Three more characters can be unlocked depending on your abilities and each has their own individual wardrobes consisting of suitably baggy jeans and beanie hats. They certainly look the part, but so far we haven't seen many differences between each character, other than cosmetics. It is the tracks themselves which are the important factor here, and at first glance they compare favourably with *SSX*'s multi-route mountains. Crammed with short cuts and plenty of misleading dead ends, negotiating them will take a great deal

PICTURE PERFECT

The replays in *Code Alien* feature the novel touch of being able to take your very own action images...



1. You have four empty slots to fill with your very own pictures.

2. Simply watch the replay and use the © button to snap your own screenshots.

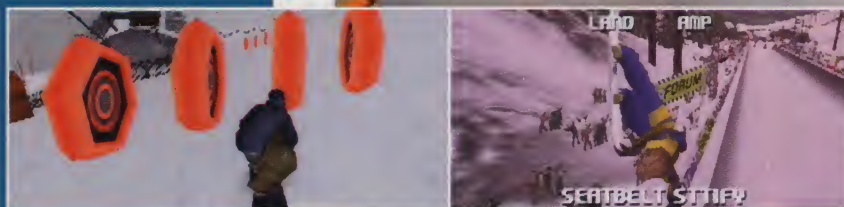


3. You can zoom in and out for that elusive money shot.

4. If you don't like them, simply press ⓧ to delete them and start again.



Cutting up other boarders is enjoyable, but the game tends to slow down somewhat.



Some of the tricks' names will make you snigger...



of skill and a keen eye as treacherous hazards such as woodlands, ravines and ski centres are on you almost as soon as you spot them on the distant horizon – such is the speed of the game.

There are two-player spins on most of the modes available whereby you can compete against a friend for the quickest times and the most suicidal stunts, and the split-screen engine retains every ounce of the speed and detail of the single-player experience, albeit in a narrow window. It is the attention to detail and the licenses included that will undoubtedly endear this to the snowboarding fan, though. Included in the package are big names such as Arnette, Burton, Duotone, M3, Sessions, Salomon, Volcom and Timex so that the look and feel of the game is spot-on.

The package is wrapped up and presented in a kind of extreme sports magazine-style fashion, and the experience is rounded off nicely with a suitably pounding soundtrack and those ever-so-cheesy 'it's time to prove yourself' voiceovers.

Despite the somewhat odd name, we have yet to see evidence of extraterrestrial activity in this title, but keep an eye to those skies for a UK release later this year. □

ON TARGET?

COOL BOARDERS: CODE ALIEN

Code Alien is about the fearless ability to gleam sky-high air off of anything that lies in your path. But are the tracks challenging enough?



GRAPHICS

Looking as good as any other boarder that's around.



TWO-PLAYER

Expect sparks to fly on the devilish head-to-head mode.



ALIEN ACTIVITY

You call a game *Code Alien*, you expect MONSTERS!

//The onus is on gravity-defying stunts that can be achieved via a series of ramps and halfpipes//



Performing trick combos is the best part of the game, albeit hard to perfect...



Having just scraped through to the finish, you can watch it all over again.



In the Combined mode, the amount of tricks you perform determines where you start on the grid.



Hitting the jump button on the lip of a ramp is essential for getting that desirable big air...



WORDS: STE CURRAN

EVERGRACE

Finally, an RPG that encourages the player to wear more than just a faded *Red Dwarf* T-shirt, black jeans and some cheap goth jewellery.

Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: From Software
Players: 1
Release: February

Glance at the screenshots, and admire the robes, swords, maps and dungeons. You will see that *Evergrace* is an RPG – but hold on, let's put our preconceptions aside and declare an amnesty for closet role-players everywhere. Hey, fellow wizards and barbarians, this is the 21st Century. You have nothing to fear from people who know nothing of orcs, elves and 60-sided dice. We can all live in harmony, as long as we can all remember to wash once in a while and refrain from fantasising about scantily clad nymphs, draped Lela-style around dragons.

Evergrace's extensive plot begins with the journey of Darius – one of the two central characters – to avenge the death of his murdered parents. While searching, he is magically transported into a parallel world from which he must try and return. Sharline – the second character – is then called up to help him, taking on a kind of big sister role. The player gets to choose to play as either of the questing kids, and can switch between them at any of the save points dotted around *Evergrace's* landscapes. Unsurprisingly, the substance of the game comes from exploring, lever switching and combat. Fans of the arcane will be pleased that said combat can involve a substantial amount of magic.

Fans of *The Clothes Show* will be equally delighted that your dress sense is also taken into account. Oddly enough for a game in a genre so squarely aimed at your inner nerd, *Evergrace* expects you to carry off your quest with a sense of style. Extra abilities and powers can be gained from wearing certain combinations of armour and clothing, which is hardly unusual in an RPG, but From Software has taken the idea one step further. Should you pick out a particularly gorgeous

BATTLE POWER

Winning in combat depends on how hard you press those buttons.



Evergrace uses the touch sensitive analogue buttons on the face of your PS2 Dual Shock 2 in order to gauge how hard you'd like your combat blows to be. In principle it's a good idea, but it's somewhat tricky to get the hang of. The harder you press, the more your power bar decreases, and since it takes a while to charge back up again, pressing a fraction too hard can result in a long pause between blows and thus an untimely death. Also, since running takes your power away, you're advised to take a brief walk around before entering into any combat.



Ghoulish demons, mystical fire, heroes with sharp weaponry – pretty enough, but not a situation that'll shock RPG fans.



Exploring's fine, but it's much more satisfying to give someone a good hoofing.

matching ensemble, the in-game fashion critic will swoon with stylistic appreciation, and you will then be offered a considerable discount when it comes to buying and repairing your weapons. Since the outfits you buy are neatly represented on the character model, you can then swagger around monster-infested dungeons, safe in the knowledge that you're the best dressed adventurer in town.

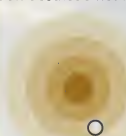
The developer's visual efforts have clearly been concentrated on your character's clothing, because at present the locations that form the background of the game seem to suffer from a lack of next generation gloss. Initially developed with the PSone in mind, it remains to be seen if *Evergrace* will push the PlayStation 2 to anywhere near its limits – bizarrely, some slow-down seemed to occur even in the simpler scenes. Still, if suffering slow-down is necessary for an utterly immersive RPG experience, we'll happily let the game grind away. It'll just give us more time to paint our lead miniatures. □

ON TARGET? EVERGRACE

Behind the catwalk styling lurks an average RPG. Fashion-conscious adventurers might find it an aesthetic heaven, though.



WARDROBE
Spot on style for Tolkien-lovers everywhere.



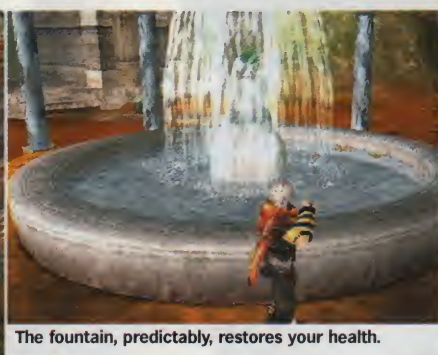
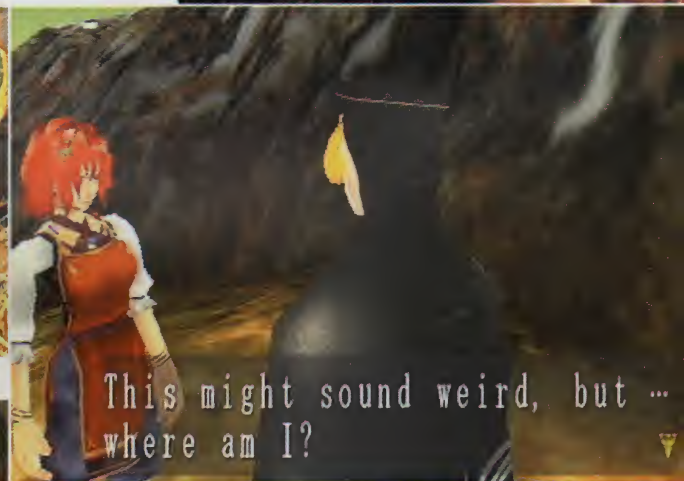
GRAPHICS
Good detail, but underwhelming environments.



DUNGEONEERING
The necessary repeated exploration can be tiring.



Hit something, and a satisfying yellow glow will be your reward. It's always good to face the right way, though.



Nice shoes, shame about the socks... Shinji Mikami looks worried about his OPS2 grilling.



WORDS: AMOS WONG/PHOTOGRAPHY: MARTIN BURTON

Let's just say the *Resident Evil* series has been heading in a certain way, or direction, up until this point. I'm going to change that direction...

If you played the original PlayStation, you'll know *Resident Evil*. Goo-dripping zombies, heart-stopping gameplay, the somewhat misspelt Raccoon City... *Resi* brought sheer bloody terror to the world's favourite console, and it made a star out of creator Shinji Mikami in the process. As *Resi*'s spiritual father sets about bringing his undead hoards to PlayStation 2, OPS2 talks about to Mikami-san about *Code: Veronica*, online gaming, ripping off John Woo and just why he doesn't like DVDs...

MIKAMI

WHEN SHINJI MIKAMI WAS A LAD IN PRIMARY SCHOOL, he wanted to be somebody – he wanted to leave his mark on the world. Figuring a job in a creative industry was the way to go, Mikami-san pursued a career in videogames. It was a career decision that eventually lead to Capcom and ultimately to a game that redefined terror in videogames and created the 'survival horror' genre – *Resident Evil*.

Resident Evil was a landmark title. Not only did its atmosphere, intelligence and gameplay take horror games to a new trouser-soiling level, it marked a comeback for the humble zombie – rescuing one of horror cinema's best, and during the Nineties, most neglected staples. Alongside its cinematic rejuvenation of the action/adventure, *Resident Evil* was also 'notable' for having a cheesy live action intro plus some equally dubious dialogue. Thankfully, horror fans ignored the B-movie 'homage' and looked instead to the atmosphere-drenched gameplay. Thankfully, Capcom also saw the error of its ways and replaced *Resi*'s movie madness with some literally eye-popping CG intros...

"I'm not always doing things that are good," laughs Mikami, referring to both this early faux pas and his current dual role as General Manager of Capcom's Research and Development Department Four and one of the company's board members. ➡

☐ "Previously, I could just concentrate on the game development side. Now I have to think about the sales and management sides. It's a real balance."

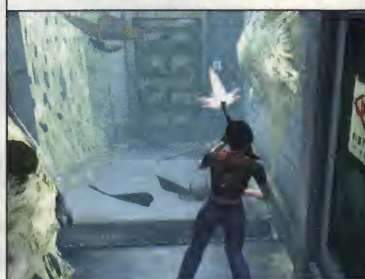
Back on the games side, things are equally inscrutable. While Capcom has just announced a PS2 upgrade to the previously Dreamcast-only *Resident Evil Code: Veronica*, the next 'true' incarnation of Mikami's zombie series remains very much an enigma despite its announcement at February's PlayStation 2000 Festival. Until then, Survival Horror fans can sate themselves with Mikami's new horror action/adventure game – *Devil May Cry* [see boxout]. The horror, the horror...

Let's start at the beginning. What led you to choose the horror genre and how did the concept of *Resident Evil* originate?

It was my boss's idea. He said, "Let's make a horror game!" I enjoy horror movies, so I thought I could make a good game out of it. Although I was excited to create a horror game, it was a concern whether the game would be accepted and sell. In the end, the game's popularity came as a surprise.

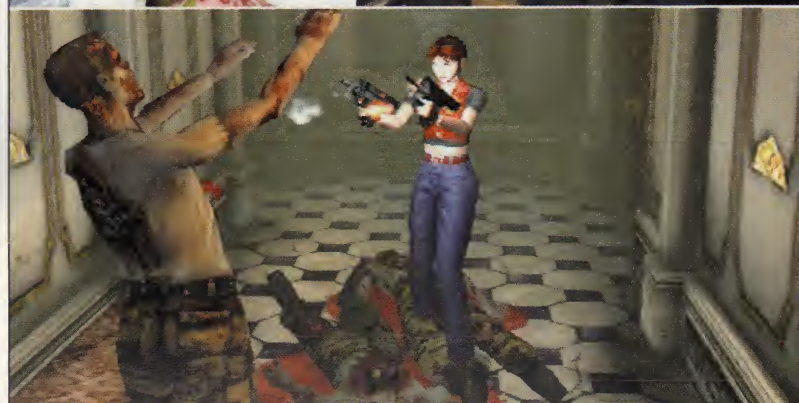
With the original *Resi*, you established the survival horror genre. How do you keep the series fresh when developing sequels?

Visuals are paramount. Players notice improvement there immediately. I think about new gameplay elements that can be introduced next time around, and I always add at least one new feature. But the challenge isn't just about new additions. We must give players these enhancements but without losing that *Resident Evil* atmosphere. That's a challenge in itself.



RESIDENT EVIL: CODE VERONICA X

Long rumoured for a PS2 appearance, the previously-Dreamcast only *Code: Veronica* is heading to your favourite next gen console in a tweaked form (thus the 'X' appendage). *Code: Veronica X* tells the story of *Resi 2*'s survivor, Claire Redfield, who has been kidnapped by Umbrella and left on a deserted island. The best in the series, the game is due in the UK this summer.



Why do you think players are fascinated by the fear element in games?

I think people enjoy the thrill of being scared and startled. This type of enjoyment can be seen when people watch horror movies or read a scary book. It's fun to be scared, don't you think?

The *Resi* games have superb sound effects and music. What's your approach to creating fear through the audio design?

I don't treat the background music or sound effects like footsteps as separate audio elements – they must flow together as one. If they're treated individually, they may not work to the best effect in the final mix. Even when there's no music, I still consider the silence as a sound...

***Resi*'s CG movie sequences have also improved. What's your approach to creating these scenes and what challenges are involved?**

Keeping the balance is challenging. If we focus too much on the story line, visuals can look boring. On the other hand, too much focus on the visuals can be at the expense of the story. For *Code: Veronica*'s opening, I ripped out the scenario pages when I first read them. I thought it wouldn't work visually and would be boring – I wanted another story. The new version's a little John Woo-style now, isn't it? Originally we used three cuts of the final scene from *Face/Off* but it was just too much! [Laughs]

It's rumoured that the next *Resident Evil* game for PS2 puts you in control of employees of Umbrella Corp, to see the virus development from their perspective. Is this true?

It might be fun to have someone from Umbrella as a major character. If we focus on STARS as usual,

justice is always behind them. STARS agents have to help – they must 'act good' and cooperate. But since then I've scrapped the (Umbrella) idea.

So have settings and characters been finalised?

We've set the main game, but not sub-characters. All I can say is the main character isn't from Umbrella and the setting isn't America... [Laughs]

What's your impression on the difference between Japanese and Western character design styles?

Western game characters tend to be more realistic while the Japanese don't need 'too literal' a representation of reality to accept it. Take a Picasso painting, for example. It's from the imagination, more abstract. People who understand the style know the value of the image.

Will characters from the previous *Resident Evil* games make an appearance?

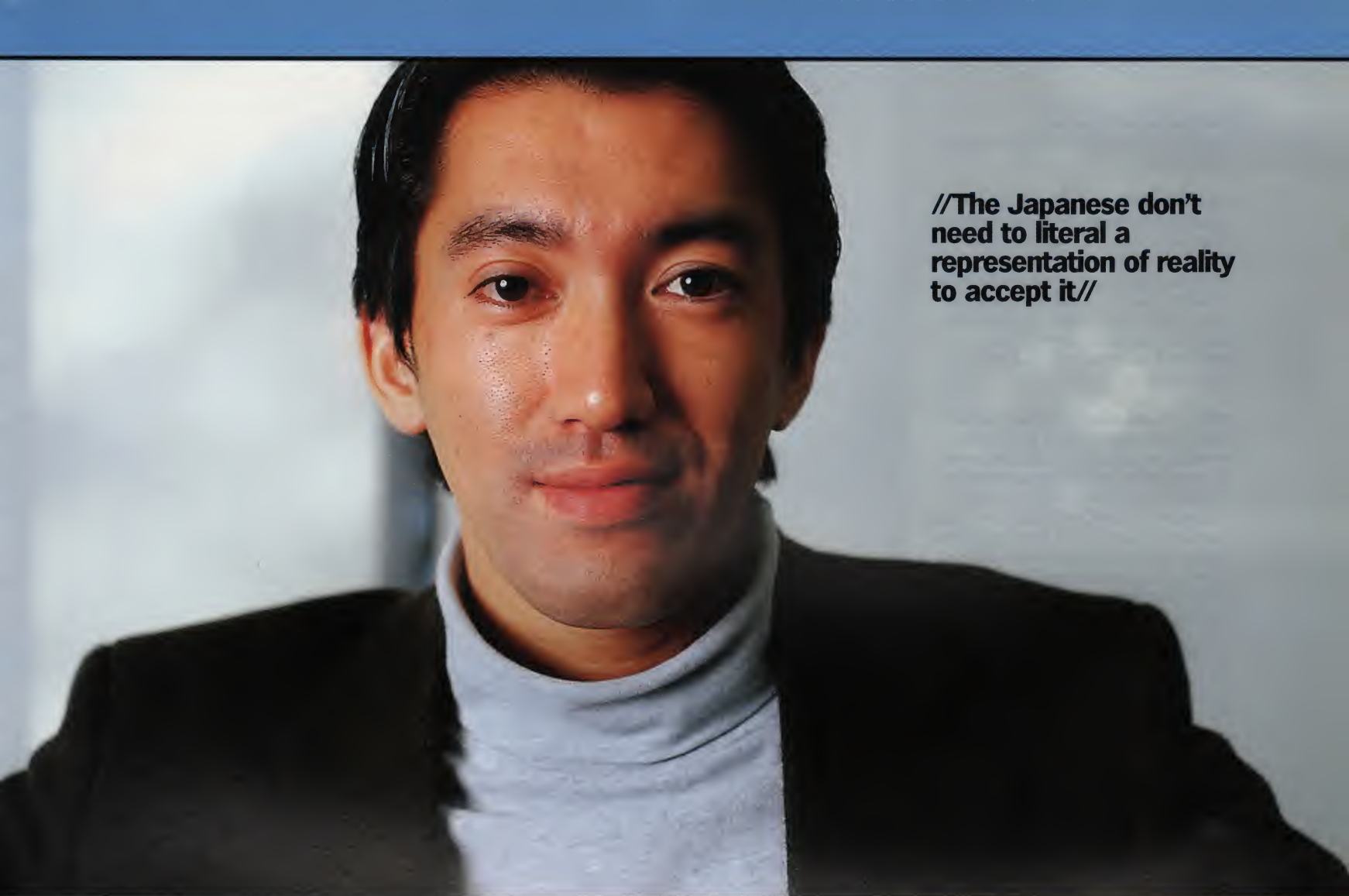
[Puts finger to lips] Sssssh.

How is development progressing on the new PS2 *Resident Evil*?

There's a loooong way to go...

Is a totally online game an area you are interested in exploring with the *Resident Evil* world? How would the horror aspect of the game adapt in this situation?

It'd have much more freedom. Let's say several people join a game. Some may be skilled players, some not, but the pattern will always be different – it'll be a fresh experience whenever players join. That's the kind of world I want to provide. It'd be great to incorporate a headset so you can call for



//The Japanese don't need to literal a representation of reality to accept it//

back up – and also hear other player's screams when they die! [Laughs] A player might also lie, calling for help when they're actually okay. Then he or she could trap others that come along to help, bringing them into the same area where the Nemesis is and let them take care of the problem!

Research has obviously moved on from the earlier *Resi* games. When you create *Raccoon City's* environments, weaponry, technology and monsters, what kind of research do you do?

For *Code: Veronica*, I had to separate the staff. The people crazy about guns worked on the firearms, another group worked on the characters while another would do photographic research on houses, castles and so on. For comparison, 50 people worked on *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis*, as opposed to 70 on *Code: Veronica*.

***Code: Veronica* is probably even more disturbing than the previous *Resident Evil* titles. How do you dream up so much nastiness?**
Let's just say that we have a very creative team.

Claire looked cool and tough in *Code: Veronica*. Did you have that in mind since the start?
Claire became a lot tougher than I imagined. [Laughs] I thought she should look the same, but the game director made her that way because she had such an experience in *Resident Evil 2*, she could handle any situation now!

How much closer does *Code: Veronica* come to your perfect vision of *Resident Evil*?
Veronica is probably around 50-60% of where I want to go. With the PlayStation 2, I hope to make up the other half. It's going to be a little different.

For example, let's say the *Resident Evil* series has been heading a certain way, or direction, up until this point. I'm going to change that direction.

What's your impression of the PlayStation 2? Does the hardware open up new possibilities for game design and gameplay?

Obviously the visuals. If we concentrate on these developments, we'll be able to produce very high quality graphics. The negative side to the PS2 is that it supports DVD, so the movie industry as well as the music industry are now our competitors. In Japan, people are spending more money on DVDs rather than software – they can buy two DVDs for the price of one game. I asked my team whether they've bought any games and several people said they haven't, but they did buy about five or six DVDs. It's going to be a challenge for us. The pie is the same and our budgets remain the same. How you divide it, that's the question.

Has the PlayStation 2 been as hard to work with as some people are saying?

It's really difficult. With the PlayStation, Sony provided a library of 'middleware' which helps display graphics on-screen. There's nothing like that for the PS2, so we've had to create everything from scratch. That means there are lots of bugs – the main issue has been debugging. The memory size is also a little small.

Of all the enhancements in suspense and gameplay possible using a full 3D setting, which do you think has been the most important?

With previous consoles, the visuals didn't quite match up to what I had in mind. Now I can convey the emotions of the characters in their expressions ☑



□ and movement. With characters now looking more human, I can make the game more dramatic.

The visuals can take up a lot of the game's overall time and budget. For example, with *Dino Crisis 2*, how much of the total budget went towards the opening movie?

It cost about half a million dollars, which is about a fifteenth of the total development cost. I set the basic direction the Intro should take and we then leave it to the professionals we hire to execute it. Only a few small amendments are made after it comes back to us.

What's your view of modern horror movies – was the golden age was back in the Eighties? Are there any recent examples you like, or are games the best medium to scare audiences?

I thought there were too many horror movies in the Eighties, the market was flooded. It's like taking medicine. The more you take, the less effect it has and you then need to take a stronger one. If the strength stays the same, people start to get bored. So the genre just died. Perhaps *Return of the Living Dead* made a small impact and brought horror back. *BrainDead* [Peter Lord of the Rings' Jackson's Raimi-esque zombie flick – *Undead Ed*] did as well. But now the style has changed completely to movies like *Scream* and *I Know What You Did Last Summer*. Games are getting better at expressing horror, so perhaps we can take over the genre, but we need more talented producers or directors to create games.

Most people remark that *Resident Evil* has a western movie influence. Are you also inspired by Japanese animation, comics or films?

That's a difficult question, because I really couldn't say exactly what's been an influence. I did want to make a game play like a movie, but I don't think I made the *Resident Evil* series in a Hollywood movie-style or copied all their methods. I put my own expression into the game, so perhaps the way I convey that is in a Japanese visual style.

You would've been amongst the first generation of anime viewers then?

I was inspired by anime when I was young. Anime

CURRICULUM VITAE

Name: Shinji Mikami
Nationality: Japanese
Date of birth: 11/8/65
Birthplace: Manchester, England

Gameography:
Aladdin (SNES) 1993
Goof Troop (SNES) 1994
Resident Evil (PSone) 1996
Resident Evil: Directors Cut (PSone) 1997
Resident Evil 2 (PSone) 1998
Dino Crisis (PSone) 1999
Resident Evil 3: Nemesis (PSone) 1999
Resident Evil Code: Veronica (Dreamcast) 1999

Hobbies: Collecting watches
Favourite videogames: *Family Circuit* (NES)
Favourite films: *The Professional*, *Jaws*, zombie movies in general
Favourite authors: Osamu Tezuka, Kazuo Umezu
Favourite bands/musicians: Wiener Philharmoniker (Viennese Philharmonic), Yevgeny Mravinsky (Russian conductor), Wilhelm Furtwangler (German composer)

shows and games were state-of-the-art, each one was well conceived. Now anime feels more like a factory – things just aren't that inspiring.

Do you think the games industry will evolve with the PlayStation 2 or will there be a revolution instead?

The improvements have been mainly to do with the graphics so far – how many colours can be used, new technologies and what the next generation machines are been capable of. People have been putting too much focus on the visuals and tend to forget about a game's core concept – the gameplay. Now that the graphic level has almost reached its peak, they will have to go back to the basics and address what the gameplay is.

Do you ever feel like creating a really light-hearted, happy title?

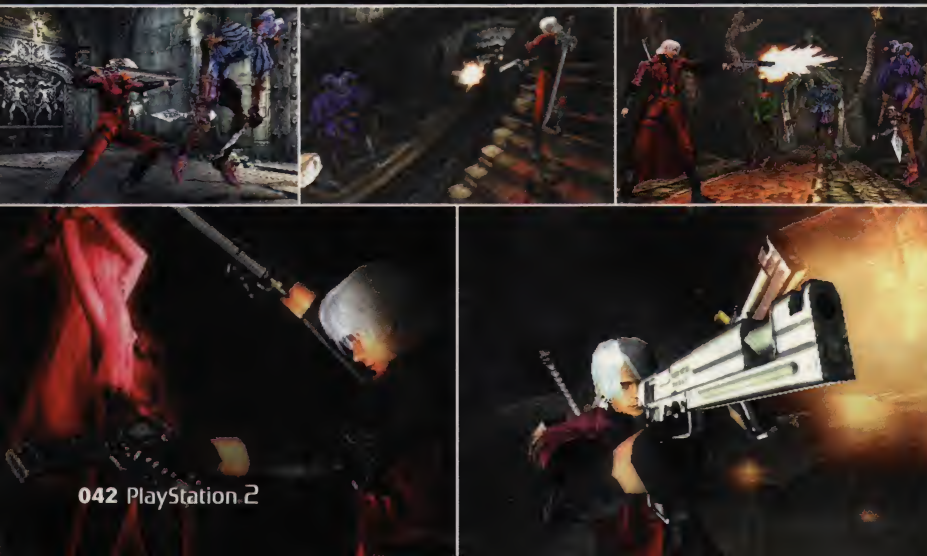
Yes I do, but at the moment I don't have enough time to become really serious about this.

You've become known as the master of Survival Horror. What other stories and themes do you see the genre expanding to, beyond *Resi* and *Dino Crisis*?

I'm thinking of other new styles of games within the Survival Horror genre, but they're still in the planning stage. That said, it may not be a good idea to introduce too many Survival Horror games. If I established another one, it may adversely effect *Resident Evil*. For other genres, maybe something more like an RPG would be good. □

DEVIL MAY CRY

Announced at the same time as *Code: Veronica X*, *Devil May Cry* is Mikami's new action/adventure that started life as *Resident Evil 4*. Starring human/demon hybrid Dante in a quest to rid the world of evil, Mikami says the game is "completely different from *Resident Evil*". Apparently, the game's theme is "coolness", while Dante has a "burning heart and intense presence" Mikami hopes players will "feel". *Devil May Cry* hits the UK this winter.



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DEMO CD

We're the only magazine to bring you
playable levels of the latest games

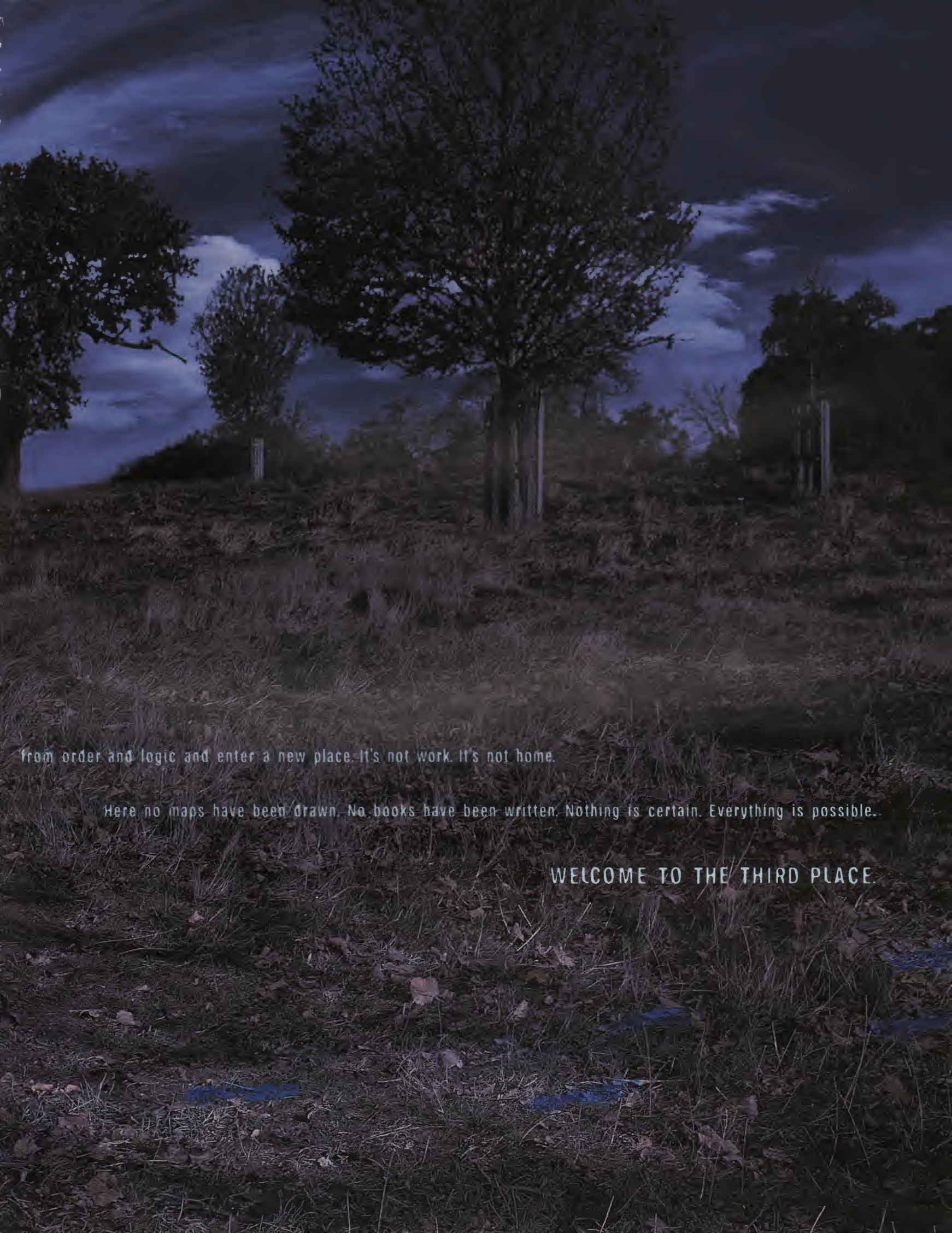
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A dark, moody landscape photograph. In the foreground, there is a field of tall, dry grass and some fallen leaves. In the middle ground, several trees are visible, including a large, full-canopied tree in the center and a few smaller, thinner trees to the left and right. The background shows a dark, cloudy sky with some lighter patches where the sun might be trying to break through. The overall tone is somber and atmospheric.

from order and logic and enter a new place. It's not work. It's not home.

Here no maps have been drawn. No books have been written. Nothing is certain. Everything is possible.

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SPY

EDITED BY JAMIE SEFTON

headliners

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Your face in a PS2 game	→ p65

IT'S NOT OFTEN IN this cynical videogames world, that you play something that leaves you genuinely shaking with excitement. It's a profound relief then that *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty* does just that. Hideo Kojima's 3D stealth and shooting adventure not only lives up to the astonishing hype, but perhaps for the first time ever in terms of PS2 games, actually exceeds the expectations placed upon it. OPS2 got its hands on the near-complete first level demo version that will be included free with Konami's PS2 mech-robot game ZOE on its release in March – and here's our actual experiences of playing this Incredible game.

□ After the opening 'widescreen' cut scenes showing a cigarette smoking Solid Snake activating an invisibility stealth suit and bungle jumping from New York's George Washington bridge onto the cargo ship *Discovery* (described in the OPS2#02 preview) you get an options menu. Starting the game throws you into further conversations via Codec between the scientist character of Otacon and Snake revealing that the Sons of Liberty terrorists storming the ship want to capture war machine Metal Gear Ray for reasons unknown.

□ The first few minutes of playing are used to familiarise yourself with Snake's inventory of high tech gear and getting accustomed to the controls, which are ingeniously simple to use. The Dual Shock 2's left analogue stick moves Snake smoothly around, whereas the right stick is used to change camera views when spying on enemies in the MGS trademark 'corner view'

mode. The **A** is the action button for hanging off rails and turning handles, **B** is for strangling enemies and using weapons, **C** punches and uses the 'knock on wall' trick for luring guards and **X** has Snake crouching or crawling into narrow hidey holes and under tables.

□ The much talked about first-person mode is activated by hitting **X**, instantly giving you a Snake's-eye view for accurately aiming weapons at enemies. In the early stages of the demo, Snake's only weapon is an M9 tranquilliser gun with laser sights. Press **LB** and you can guide the red laser sight towards a patrolling guard, hold **B** to arm the gun and release to fire the dart. The powerful effects of the tranquilliser act much quicker if you hit someone in the head, rather than in the leg or hand when it can take several seconds to kick in before they drop to the floor, asleep.

□ Once a guard is rendered unconscious (large Zs appear above their heads) you can pick up their limp, heavy bodies and drag them around, an inspired addition to the gameplay that leaves you the tricky problem of how to dispose of the body. Hmm. Well, you can just hide their bulks in one of the ship's lockers, dump them overboard into the sea, leave them

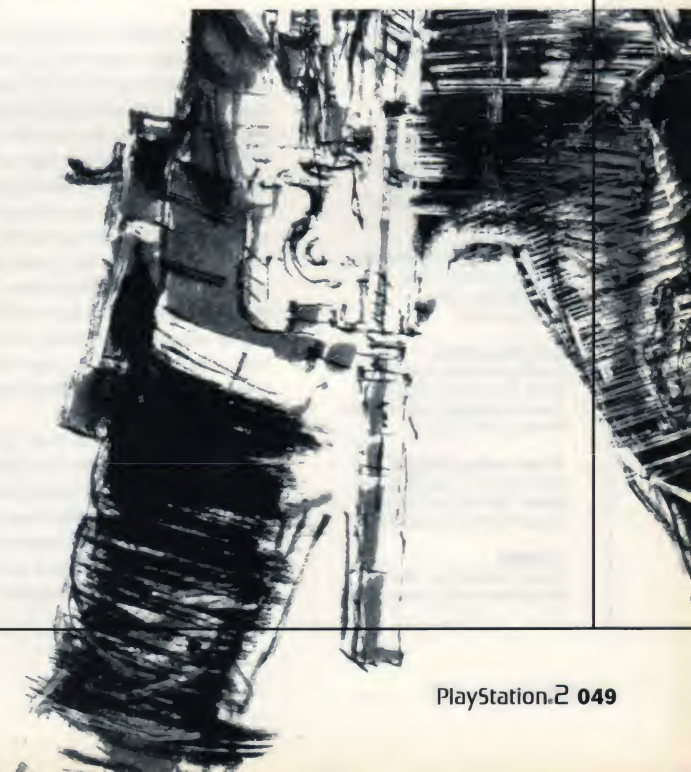


KING OF SNAKE

OPS2 is gobsmacked by the playable *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty*.



Hands in the air: Snake can perform hold-ups to get bonus items.



SPY

Shooting a fire extinguisher releases gas that reveals deadly laser traps.



THE DEVIL'S IN THE DETAIL

Here are OPS2's favourite moments in the demo.

1. Environmental effects

Lashing rain that changes direction, water splashing off railings

2. High tech binoculars

For zooming in and spotting terrorists. If outside, rain splashes obscure the view.

3. Details

Wet footprints left on the shiny floor of ship, blood on shields of terrorists when Snake is shot, darts that stay stuck in bodies.

4. Realistic AI

At one point a guard's radio wasn't working, so he tried to run out of the room to fetch help.

5. Shooting bottles

Each individual bottle breaks in a different way, shattering and falling over, spilling their contents.

6. The lockers

Being able to get Snake to shut himself inside one, then kiss a poster of a semi-clad lady displayed on the door. Right.

7. Waking up

A guard discovers a tranquillised mate. He kicks him. The sleeping guard gains consciousness.

8. Cardboard box

Evading terrorists by hiding inside it, plus the first-person view allowing you to spy baddies through a small hole.

9. Live action 'snippets'

Displayed in the corner of the screen showing you important action happening elsewhere.

10. Dying

A cool 'cracked lens' effect if Snake dies in first-person mode.

☐ slumped nonchalantly against walls or execute them. This can be done with shots to the head or body from the USP 9mm gun you discover later, making your victim twitch disturbingly before dying and covering floors and walls with splashes of blood. Bodies can also be 'shaken down' for bandages (to halt bleeding wounds), ammo and other useful items.

☐ Other neat tricks up Snake's sleeve include taking a terrorist hostage (a delicious irony) so his comrades will hesitate to shoot – or performing a hold up. This is a wonderful moment and happens when Snake manages to sneak up behind and surprise a guard, who lifts up his hands to surrender. You can now aim your gun at his head or crotch and the terrified guard will wriggle desperately to 'give up' extra ammo or health in a bid to save his life. Hilarious in an evil kind of way.

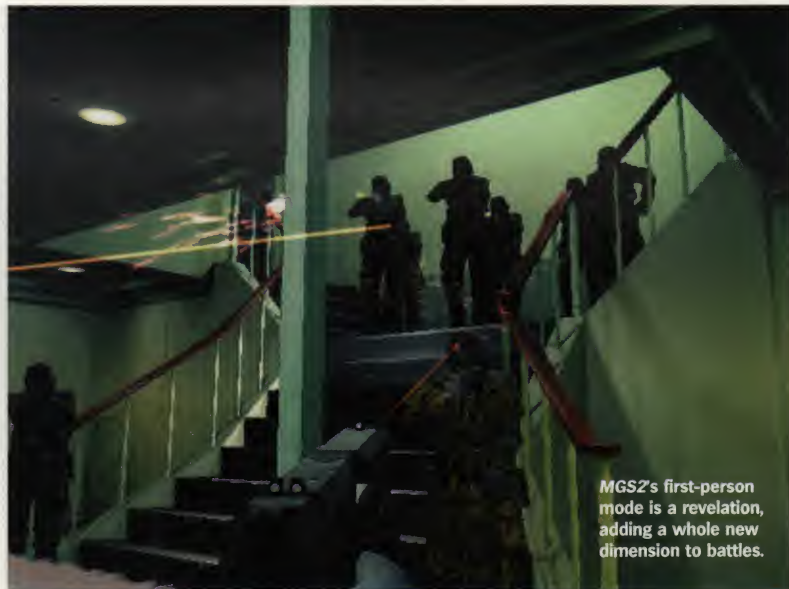
☐ If you are spotted by an enemy – signified by that *Metal Gear* sound and a red exclamation mark – you have several crucial seconds to disable them before they get on their radios and alert the cavalry. You have the option of simply pumping them with lead (or drugs in the case of the tranquilliser), disabling the radio or evading your pursuers by skulking in the shadows. But if you choose to hide – beware. MGS2's AI is amazing, with guards who'll search thoroughly for you, opening lockers, lifting up the infamous cardboard box that Snake can use for camouflage, or shining torches under tables. The fast heartbeat pulse of the Dual Shock 2 adds to the nail-biting tension.

☐ As you progress further inside the cargo ship, you stumble upon two terrorists guarding a central lounge area. Once you've taken them out quietly and seen off their mate who's positioned within earshot downstairs, firing at things with a gun can produce some startling results. Shoot the rack of magazines and bits of

shredded paper will fly off, one publication maybe falling open on the floor. Walk over to the bar and you can shoot the individually modelled bottles, some shattering and spilling their contents, some breaking in half and nudging others along the shelf.

☐ At the end of the demo, you face the first 'boss' character on the rain-lashed deck of the ship, Olga Gurlukovich, a deadly agent and pregnant daughter of the Russian commander leading the terrorist assault. Unlike the last *Metal Gear*, fighting bosses is considerably less frustrating. Olga's AI is superb using objects on the ship for cover, such as an incredibly realistic tarpaulin flapping in the wind.

//Snake's controls are sublime, the camera is perfect and the atmosphere unparalleled//



MGS2's first-person mode is a revelation, adding a whole new dimension to battles.



EXTERMINATE! EXTERMINATE!

Spooky horror sci-fi action in SCE's *Resi* rival, *Extermination*.

WITH THE SUCCESS of *Resi*, *Silent Hill* and well, shadowy games with monsters in them, the trend for Survival Horror titles looks set to continue on PS2 with the release of *Extermination*. Developed by Deep Space (composed of ex-designers for *Ghosts & Goblins*, *Tombi* and the original *Resident Evil*) *Extermination* is a third-person adventure that appears to be a cross between *Syphon Filter*, *Resident Evil* 3 and John Carpenter's *The Thing*.

Described by Deep Space's Tokuro Fujiwara as a "panic action" title, the plot is set on Christmas Eve 2005. The Marine Corp's 'Red Light' recon team (including central characters Sergeants Dennis Riley and Roger Gilman) has been sent to the South Pole to investigate an abandoned base. When the team's transport plane crashes, there are only two survivors who struggle on towards the base without any idea of the horror that lies ahead. One locates

an underground laboratory kitted out with alien technology at one point, and he comes across the scene of some truly hideous genetic mutation. Cue explosions, some quite startling monsters and much, much nastiness for our hero.

To enhance the likelihood of panic, the game will incorporate a 'Region Action' control system to enable you to perform complex and often unique actions with simple and intuitive controls, which means that even the most difficult actions can be performed with a few buttons and an analogue stick. If it can succeed in bringing rapid and context-appropriate character controls to an atmospheric, cinematic adventure, there's a lot to get worked up about.

Extermination is due out in Japan in March, with a UK release confirmed by SCEE for soon after. Could this really be a *Resi* beater or is it the first in a wave of 'panic action' titles? Wait and see... ☐ PF

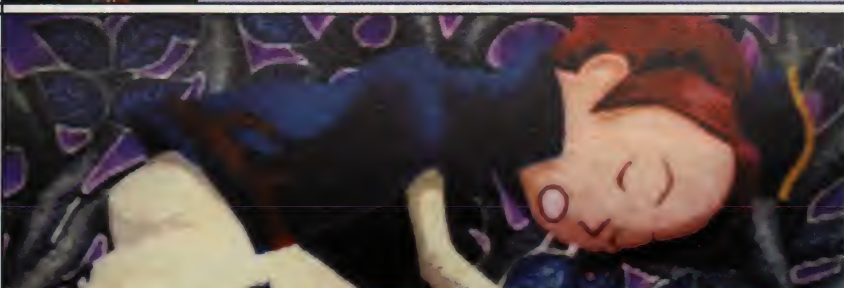
Hoping it will all go away is not really going to cut it in *Extermination*.



Your character may look calm, but the developers are hoping you won't be.

BLUE LINES

EA's hotly-anticipated *Quake* debut on PS2 will be called *Quake III Revolution*, and is tentatively expected on 6 March »THQ is to bring the eternal struggle between man and fish to PS2 this summer with *Bass Fishing*, complete with a 'lure-cam' to get you closer to the action »Wave your hands in the air for Konami's *Para Para Paradise*, their innovative PS2 twist on the dancing game.



Dreamy. 7: *The Cavalry of Molmorth* includes charming fairy tale-inspired cut-scenes.



Although the 'rotation battle system' sounds complex, it's actually very intuitive and enjoyable to use.

SEVEN-UP

Namco's sumptuous new game wows RPG-starved PS2 owners.

AFTER DOMINATING THE beat-'em-up genre with its *Soul Calibur* and *Tekken* licences, Namco has uncharacteristically released a *Final Fantasy*-esque role-playing game in Japan. 7: *The Cavalry of Molmorth*, is a highly original-looking DVD title that throws players into a beautifully-realised world evoking the atmosphere of a Grimm's Fairy Tale combined with a Jan Pienkowski pop-up book. Players take on the main character of an apprentice knight who enlists the help of a hefty sidekick, the local village army and a host of magicians, barbarians and ninjas to combat ancient demons ravaging the kingdom of Almethera.

Gameplay is reminiscent of most RPGs, with reams of character conversations and item collection, but the new 'rotation battle system' employed in the fight sequences is a nifty variation of a well-worn idea. Basically, players arrange seven characters on a 4x3

grid, taking into account their hit points and special skills, such as healing or magic. Winning battles is simply a matter of reducing foes' hit points to zero before they find an opportunity to kill a member of your 'cavalry'.

7's graphics are lush, featuring an in-game style of a 2D/3D cartoon combined with haunting, almost hand-drawn animated cut-scenes. Medieval towns and villages are lined with twisted wooden houses and bustling market squares, surrounded by a dense forest hiding old wooden road signs, gnarled trees and nightmarish creatures. RPG fans should be salivating over these impressive screenshots of 7: *The Cavalry of Molmorth*, but with a tome of translating to undertake, Namco's latest masterpiece won't be casting any spells in the UK for a while yet. We'll keep you posted. ☐ JS

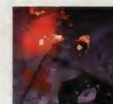
*Check out [in Japanese!]

www.namco.co.jp/home/cs/ps2/seven.



LIST

Five gloriously gory PS2 titles made to make you lose your lunch



»**Unreal Tournament**
You think that's flocked wallpaper? No, it's brains à la brick work, and

if you don't get a move on yours will be joining it. *Unreal* is the first-person shooter that shows its disapproval of critics by lining them up and removing their need for hats. Bring a sponge. See our gore-soaked review on page 100. **Emetic or pathetic?** Holding up quite well.



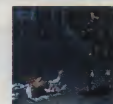
»**Soldier of Fortune**
Any game that is going to allow you to shoot individual limbs off enemies and

gives bonus points for groin or neck shots is not going to be for anyone prone to 'funny turns'. Ultra-realistic weapon effects to come as standard, as will entrails, exit wounds and grim determination. See page 53. **Emetic or pathetic?** Feeling just a bit queasy.



»**Resident Evil Code: Veronica X**
The anxiety-cramping, pants-wetting experience that

always has been RE shuffles like a putrid cadaver towards PS2. Now with added pus Survival Horror is looking even more realistic than ever? After you with the bucket. **Emetic or pathetic?** Deep breaths now.



»**Extermination**
The world's first 'panic action' title aims to make even shock-hardened *Resi* fans

gibber uncontrollably and stretch their Dual Shock 2 leads over the top of the sofa. With heinous genetic mutation, an abandoned arctic base and something very nasty on your trail, it's behind you! Want to know more? Then read the story on the left. **Emetic or pathetic?** Um, where's the bathroom please?



»**Silent Hill 2**
This sequel starts with the hero receiving a letter from his dead wife. And then it starts

getting a bit scary. Nausea-inducing horror awaits you in the cursed town of Silent Hill, with more fog than a second rate magic show and creatures so mis-shapen it takes a few seconds to realise they were ever human. Thank God asylums have wipe clean walls. See our feature on page 86. **Emetic or pathetic?** I don't remember eating carrots...

Five squeaky clean PS2 games without so much as a speck of gore.

Fantavision Look at the pretty fireworks! All together now, ah! Yes. **Donald Duck: Quack Attack** Don't expect anything but cuteness here. **Rayman Revolution** Hero with no limbs, eh? Not so fast. It's a stylish, challenging platformer. **Super Bust-A-Move** The day-glo colours may make you feel ill but there are only bubbles. **Aqua Aqua: Wetrix 2.0** A charming puzzler, nothing to do with the Danish pop bitches behind Barbie Girl.

MARRIED TO THE MOB

Host your own St Valentine's Day Massacre in TalonSoft's *Mafia*.

NEVER MIND THE questionable ethics, crime syndicates and grisly murders, there's no doubt that being a Mafia gangster is cool. From *The Godfather* through to the recent Channel 4 phenomenon *The Sopranos*, the mob has a bizarre hold over popular culture – especially the pre-WWII American era of prohibition, when characters such as Al Capone held Chicago to ransom with a Tommy Gun.

Mafia: The City of Lost Heaven is an ambitious third-person action game that puts you in the concrete boots of a lowly gangster in a fictional Thirties US city. Producer Andy Morley believes that the Czech developer Illusion Softworks will deliver an underworld crime classic. "Mafia features rich and varied environments, gripping story lines and PS2 action in full 3D," he says.

As you progress through the game's 20 missions, your character must carry out various tasks including driving getaway cars,

assassinating rival gang members and protecting business 'rackets' to rise up through the ranks of the mob.

Lost Heaven is an immersing and authentic city covering 12 square miles packed with traffic, people and detailed locations including dockyards, squalid hotels and disreputable bars. Players have access to over 60 different vehicles (including the Ford Model T) all boasting realistic handling and an arsenal of uncompromising weapons for taking out enemy hoodlums with a hail of bullets.

TalonSoft and Illusion Software are pleased with the work so far on the single-player elements of *Mafia: CoLH*, but they are also hoping to include multiplayer split-screen options for Deathmatches and Capture The Flag competitions. Prospective goodfellas have plenty of time to dry clean their zoot suit for the game's release on PlayStation 2 which is set for early 2002. **JS**



TalonSoft promises that these PC screenshots show just how *Mafia: CoLH* will appear on PS2.

BLUE LINES

Konami has announced that it will be releasing a Japanese 'premium package' of its mech actioner *ZOE* alongside the regular game, featuring original video art and opening theme soundtrack »Attention To Detail, developer of *Sydney 2000*, has teamed up with Eidos again to produce another Olympics title, this time based on the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics in 2002 »DreamWorks and Havas Interactive are joining forces to produce a game based on the Hollywood blockbuster of last year, *Gladiator*



IS IT 4 WHEEL?

Drive off-road with Take 2's 4x4 Evolution.

WHEN SMUGGLER'S RUN and *Wild Wild Racing* slammed onto our PS2s at the console's launch, they opted for thrills. In fact, they abandoned any form of realism for aerial acrobatics and off-road antics that would decimate all wildlife within a ten mile radius. But as a bearded loon once said, every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Take 2's 4x4 Evolution is a realistic SUV sim, and it's a beast to tackle.

Such is the enthusiasm behind 4x4, eight licenses have signed up (Lexus, Dodge, Chevy, Nissan, Toyota, Mitsubishi, GMC and Ford) and the fact 4x4 Evolution's producer, John

O'Keefe used to race stock cars says something about the level of commitment going into getting the SUV experience just right. And if the gameplay is the proof of the pudding then this treat was cooked up by a gourmet game developer.

After a first whizz around the multiple tracks the game is noticeably different from *Smuggler's Run*. Not only are you treated to the usual gear ratios and tyre track options present in racing sims, but you have to deal with four-wheel drive. For the uninitiated, it's comical. OPS2 drove backwards for an hour. But these machines aren't meant to be soft. They're

You might recognise that floating green arrow from *Smuggler's Run*, but the similarities stop there.

demons to handle and the game reflects their temperament perfectly. Snow, dust and grit spew from under the cars and if they're not driven properly they burrow themselves into hillsides and refuse to budge. So that only leaves one option; learn to drive them, master them and ultimately enjoy them.

4x4 Evolution is going to need a lot of taming though. It's a heavy, monstrous game but off-road fans will find it totally refreshing. Due for release early summer, it should be the ideal tonic for all those tiring of *Smuggler's* wacky antics. One to look out for indeed. **BL**

GUN FOR HIRE

Killing for cash in the bloody 3D shoot-'em-up *Soldier of Fortune*.

IF YOU'RE OF the opinion that *Tekken Tag Tournament* 'is a touch violent' or *Silent Scope* 'has gratuitous gun use', stop reading now. For every other gamer, the fantastic news is that Raven Software's incredibly gory 'non-PC' PC first-person shooter, *Soldier of Fortune* is to appear on PlayStation 2.

Publisher Majesco has employed its internal development studio Pipe Dream Interactive to undertake the conversion of *SoF* and the game's Director, David Elmekies, agreed to spill his guts exclusively to *OPS2*, "We're extremely excited about picking up where Raven left off to deliver a new experience for the PS2. We all felt that *Soldier of Fortune* would make a great PS2 title, and could ultimately become one of the premier console shooters."

Soldier of Fortune stars a real-life mercenary soldier John F Mullins, who is hired to complete missions involving the assassination of various terrorists and despotic leaders (Saddam Hussein makes a cameo appearance) rescuing hostages and capturing Free World-threatening arms shipments. The game's 30 levels take the player on a gun-toting tour of the world's most dangerous and life-threatening holiday destinations, including a Siberian military base, the jungles of Uganda, a war-torn Kosovo town and the New York subway. Gameplay is simple, requiring you to stock up on the latest high tech weaponry such as flame-throwers, microwave pulse guns and rocket launchers, before storming in and killing anything that breathes.

What's truly unique about *SoF* is the graphic depiction of on-screen violence, with each character possessing 26 'gore zones' that decay and splatter as bullets strike them. Although it's very much cartoon-style mutilation, players can blast an enemy's leg off with a shotgun, leaving them screaming and hopping about in agony, before letting fly with a barrage of machine gun

bullets. Once you've left a terrorist dead and bleeding on the floor, you then have the option – if you like – of systematically removing the rest of his twitching limbs before hacking his trunk to pieces with a sharp knife. *Donald Duck: Quack Attack* this ain't.

So will Elmekies and his team retain all the game's notorious nastiness? "Well, we aren't making any conscious decisions to tone the violence down," he replies. "Our focus will be on gameplay and the incorporation of features that PS2 owners will be looking for. We simply want to preserve the key elements that were put into the hit PC version." Elmekies also revealed that Pipe Dream is definitely planning multiplayer split-screen battles in *SoF*, "The deathmatching feature is a very high priority. We've every intention of pushing PS2's capabilities to create a game that will blow console gamers away, with two- and four-player deathmatches and a logical control scheme."

Contrary to other tales of woe, Pipe Dream Interactive is now enjoying working with Sony's next generation machine. "The PS2 is a very powerful and complex system to develop games for and it'll be interesting to see just how far we can go with it. The big difference with *Soldier of Fortune* is the sheer size of the game – the environments are huge and incredibly detailed."

As one of the most enjoyable, sick and funny first-person action adventures released on the PC last year, *Soldier of Fortune* should turn out to be a killer PS2 game when it hits the shops in August this year. ☐ JS

//What's truly unique about *Soldier of Fortune* is the graphic depiction of on-screen violence//

Great balls of fire: *SoF* on PS2 could re-ignite the whole videogames violence debate. Heh.



Dreaming of *Final Fantasy X* is all we can do for the time being.



ILLUSTRATION: WILL BARRAS

SQUARE DEAL

Exciting new online plans surround the imminent launch of *Final Fantasy X* and *XI*.

WHILE PS2 GAMES have been selling respectable amounts in Japan (over 700,000 of Japan's PlayStation 2 owners have a copy of *Tekken Tag*) the country's gaming otaku aren't deserting the original PlayStation – especially the RPG nuts. Since its release for the PSone back in July, *Final Fantasy IX* has currently sold over 2,800,000 copies. It's an astonishing total, especially given Square's long-running RPG series (selling over 30 million copies to date worldwide) has eschewed the more realistic imagery of *Final Fantasy VIII* for the superdeformed anime stylings of old. So is Square ever to return to the reality-based style that broke the franchise in Europe? Say hello to *Final Fantasy* on PS2...

FINAL FANTASY X

Square's first RPG for PlayStation2, *Final Fantasy X* will be released in Japan in Spring 2001. Premiered at Square's Millennium Event, video clips revealed a game more in keeping with *FFVIII* with realistic character designs again by *FFVII* and *VIII* artist, Tetsuya Nomura. Details below:

□ Running at 60fps and displaying real-time 3D graphics, game footage showed a Squall-like character by the name of Tida believed to be the game's protagonist. Dressed in garish purple overalls and a yellow shirt, the mop-topped character's dress sense is perhaps the most striking thing about him. A particularly understated hero.

//Square have placed *FFXI* at the front of its online strategy, to be released in the summer of 2001//

□ He will be joined by two familiar looking characters. Yuna, a water goddess reminiscent of *FFVIII*'s Rinoa has been seen walking on water dressed in translucent flowing blue robes holding a staff and the third character, a fiery demon (again, unerringly similar to *FFVIII* character Ifrit) concludes the party of three.

□ The storyline is also becoming apparent. Set in a post-apocalyptic world consumed by water there appears to be a war brewing between fire gods and the water gods who now rule supreme. And instead of travelling to various towns on a world map the action will be split between dozens of small isolated islands.

□ An airship also makes an appearance, armed with a massive ion cannon and this is thought to be the domain of Ryugo, *FFX*'s despotic supplier of terror and dark magic.

□ In a turn around for Square, *FFX* now won't come packaged with Play Online software as originally announced. While *Final Fantasy X* was never intended to be a fully online RPG, it was originally meant to use Play Online to download or even swap tips and hints. That now won't be happening. See below for more on Play Online.

FINAL FANTASY XI

A shock announcement at the time, Square has placed *Final Fantasy XI* at the front of its online strategy, with a release date of summer 2001. Again, this game features character designs by Nomura-san, but most importantly, Square have stated it will be released as a 'complete online game'. Rather than simply offer online tips (as originally planned for *FFX*), gamers will instead log on to a self-contained *FF* world, with action carrying on even after you've logged off.

Square's recent Millennium Event in the UK showed an arcade-style *FFXI* cabinet where players could log on and play with gamers all over the world, whether on PS2 or using this new set-up. Game details remain hazy but the working title of *Final Fantasy XI: Online Another World* shows how seriously Square are treating PS2's online potential – and thus Play Online.

Demoed to *OPS2* at Square's Millennium Event last September, Play Online is a far-reaching worldwide venture for Square. As well as being integral to *Final Fantasy XI*, Square intend to use the service to distribute non-game goods. Other services mooted by Square include music charts (plus possible content downloads when Sony's PS2 Hard Disk Drive launches), online manga comics, real-time sports statistics (with the chance to then input these stats straight into PS2 sports games), email, Web access and of course, online shopping.

A demo version of Square's service can be found online (www.playonline.com) but the Japanese giant have far bigger plans in store. With backing by Japanese electronic giant NTT, this AOL-alike service offers a glimpse of Square's future, with the developer confirming to *OPS2* that research is currently underway into overcoming the venture's obvious language barriers. The future starts here? We'll let you know. □ **MG/BL**

A SECRET AFFAIR

Details leaked on a brand new driving title for 'next gen platforms'.

NEWS HAS EMERGED from developer Attention To Detail about its ambitious new driving adventure. *Internal Affairs* is the working title for a game set on the fictitious Phoenix Island, featuring exciting 3D race action with an involving story line centring around two characters, Tom and Lauren. Players complete missions by switching between the two main protagonists giving entirely different perspectives on what an ATD insider described as, "A unique gaming experience."

Missions are woven into a twisting plot where the player has to discover which characters they can trust and which have to be avoided at all cost. In a move similar to that of the first Lara Croft outing on the PS2, ATB also plans to release new 'episodes' after the game's release, allowing players to experience different story lines and endings. How this will be achieved is unclear, but with Sony's planned

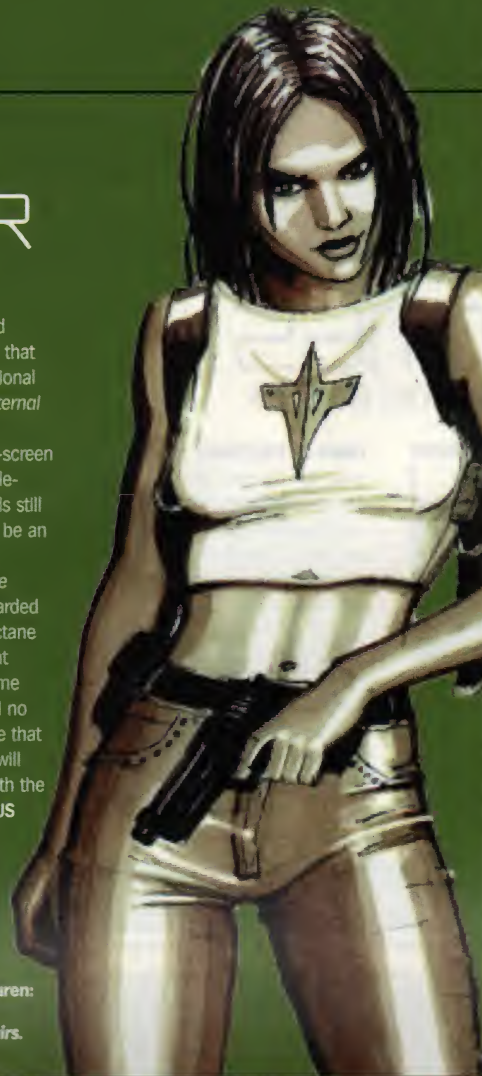
release of the Hard Disk Drive/Broadband expansion unit later this year, it's feasible that gamers could simply download the additional chapters into their PS2 from a special *Internal Affairs* Web site.

As to the must-have multiplayer split-screen aspects, ATB has only confirmed the single-player game at this time, but as the title is still in very early development, this could still be an option included in the finished product.

ATD had recent success with *Rollcage Stage 2* for PSone, which was widely regarded as a fast and graphically impressive hi-octane racer. Little more is known at the moment about *Internal Affairs*, with the driving game scheduled for a distant 2002 release and no publisher yet confirmed. However, be sure that as soon as we get our mitts on it, *OPS2* will continue to keep you bang up to date with the latest info on this potential scorcher. ☐ JS



Tom and Lauren: the stars of *Internal Affairs*. Sexy, yes?



gallery

Four hot titles winging their way to PS2.



STAR WARS: STARFIGHTER
Publisher: Activision
Release date: April

Who wants to be a heroic pilot in the *Star Wars* universe? Thought so. Twenty gorgeous starships include the svelte Naboo N-1 fighter while 14 levels await you. Huge preview next month.



G-SURFERS
Publisher: TBC
Release date: April/May

The future racer has just got much bigger. The *G-Surfers* of the title will be able to race across the surface of the entire Earth. Handy then that your top speed is going to be 4000 mph.



HIDDEN AND DANGEROUS 2
Publisher: Take 2
Release date: Q4 2001

H&D 2 promises a similar WWII experience to *Medal of Honour* on PSone only including with team-based missions, multiplayer mode and unprecedented realism.



SUPERCAR STREET CHALLENGE
Publisher: Activision
Release date: Q4 2001

Take to the streets in a collection of the world's most expensive and latest concept cars, then race until the wheels come off in locales ranging from Rome to Los Angeles. A cut above the average racer?

NEWS OF THE WORLD THIS MONTH: DENMARK

VIDEOGAMING ON A GLOBAL SCALE



FIVE AMAZING FACTS ABOUT DENMARK

1. In Denmark, seeing people drinking schnapps in the morning is a sure sign that it's somebody's birthday.
2. The first PlayStation game produced by Danish developers was called *Hugo*. No further comment...
3. Different from the rest of Scandinavia, the Danes don't like ice hockey. No, football's the game - anyone remember Euro '92?
4. In Danish, a 'danish' is called 'Wienerbrød', which means 'Bread from Vienna'.
5. In 1969, Denmark was the first country ever to make pornography legal.

Denmark's Most Wanted PlayStation 2 games

1. Tekken Tag Tournament
2. FIFA 2001
3. SSX
4. Ridge Racer V
5. Silent Scope
6. TimeSplitters
7. X-Squad
8. Smuggler's Run
9. NHL 2001
10. Orphen

*Chart source: Egmont Interactive, Denmark. 20/12/00

BLUE LINES

Customs officials had better watch out - a sequel to Rockstar's excellent *Smuggler's Run* is in development »A playable version of the *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within* movie is being developed for the PS2, as well as a sequel. Check out the *FFX* story on page 54 »Developer Sun Electronics has 'borrowed' ideas from Sega's *Typing of the Dead* game, for its forthcoming secretary-friendly Japanese PS2 title *Ashita No Jou Typing* »Namco's *Tekken* team producing a gun game for that PS2-compatible coin-op board? Whispers say so...



SPY

ISS COMES HOME

Konami kicks back at FIFA with the 'proper' ISS

At last a football game to celebrate about - 'Proper' ISS on the PS2.

FANS OF FOOTBALL videogames the world over will be united in song with the news that Konami is bringing their renowned franchise *International Superstar Soccer* to the PlayStation 2. But wait a second. Hasn't ISS for the PS2 already been released? Well, yes, kind of. Let us explain.

A series of games using the prefix *International Superstar Soccer* appeared on both the PSone and the Nintendo 64 throughout the late '90s. Although each successive update was instantly acclaimed as the finest football game on its respective platform, these titles were developed by separate studios within Konami and boasted quite distinct styles of play.

The PSone games, from *ISS Pro* in 1997 to *ISS Pro Evolution 2* in 2001, were developed by KCET. The N64 games meanwhile were developed by Major A or KCEO and were more arcadey in feel. For some reason, it was decided that KCEO would get the first shot at

producing a footie game for PS2. Instead of seeing sense and publishing this strand of the series under a new name, Konami Europe decided that they would call it, *International Superstar Soccer*. Hence, everybody who had played and loved the KCET games on PSone was rather bewildered by ISS on PS2. Thankfully, throughout this confusion, KCET have been busy producing their PS2 interpretation of ISS. However, the twists don't end there. The first sighting of KCET's ISS has been in the US, where the game has been Americanised by KCEA Honolulu, given the title *ESPN MLS ExtraTime*, and readied for a March release.

It's evidently an update of the game we know and love from PSone, demonstrating much-improved graphics, a polished sheen and gameplay tweaks. We await word from Konami on when a UK-centric version - presumably to be graced with the wisdom of Terry Butcher - will be ready for release. **SR**

THE GRID #04: Which real-time strategies are poised to storm Fortress PS2?

	Game premise	How wow graphically?	PC geek factor?	Will it click with gamers?	Deployment commencing?
Ring of Red	In an alternate spin on world history, WWII did not end with Hiroshima. Japan fought on against a Chinese/Soviet invasion army. With Mechs. Yes. Real-time strategy set in the 1940s with giant, armed robots.	It's looking good for the total rewriting of history. The graphics are detailed and individual soldiers and mechs are rendered with impressive scale. The battlefield draw distance is suitably huge.	Well it does have huge mechs running around, but the battlefields of (even an imaginary) WWII aren't really traditional geek territory. This looks PS2 through and through.	The portrayal of alternate human history is always an attractive game idea and if any developer can execute it with playability and style, Konami is it.	The Second World War makes a late and unexpected turn in March.
Legion: Legend of Exoalibur	Set in the world of Arthurian legend, this game revolves around your attempts to band together a motley collection of knights and then storm as many castles as possible all in the name of the King.	Extremely slick. Features stunning FMV sequences and buxom-beauties in pointy hats. Still too early to judge how units of knights look on the world map - if they're as good as the FMV it could be a blinder.	Can it entice spods away from the fictional Morgoth and the dreaded curse of Arcecheez spreading through the land of the fairies? Let's hope not.	Arthurian legend has never really found a strong home on consoles. However, it's a debut game from a fledgling development company so we'd bet all the stops have been pulled out to make it a success.	No idea. Whenever a noble soul has the pureness in spirit to pull it from the accursed rock in which it has been magically sealed by a great and wise magician and... Okay. November.
Giants: Citizen Kabuto	Three powers fight for supremacy on an ocean covered asteroid dotted with fertile islands. You can play as a technologically advanced Meccanyans, a magically gifted Sea Reaper or the Giant himself, Kabuto.	PS2 images are not available yet, but the PC version's visuals are distinctive, and atmospheric. Don't expect an aloof, isometric view of proceedings. You're going to be in the thick of the action.	Hardly. This is a game that defies genres, incorporating action, puzzles strategy and even the odd spot of jet ski racing.	Very likely. There's certainly more on offer here than two Earth-bound, real armies massing resources and slogging it out. However fun that is in itself.	He's a big man but even giant strides won't bring <i>Giants</i> to your local store much before early 2002. It is coming though.
Commandos 2	Set during WWII, the game revolves around your attempts as a battalion leader to move your commandos through enemy terrain and tactically secure footholds for the allies.	Highly detailed characters and beautifully rendered backgrounds leave a devastating impression. You've never seen anything like this.	Could get a few Nigels buzzing with excitement. After all, it gives them the chance to play soldiers and be in charge for once doesn't it? The distinct lack of sci-fi invaders should keep plenty away though.	The likes of <i>Medal of Honor</i> and <i>MoH: Underground</i> have proven that WW2 is a big seller. All those years ago we had our freedom won by the brave few and all we've done is turn it into amusement for the masses.	D-Day is creeping up on us very quickly. Some time in Easter you should hear the rumbling of delivery vans invading every games store across the country.
Kessen II	<i>Kessen II</i> injects an element of fantasy into its already established gameplay. In this sequel you can summon the destructive power of the elements to help defeat opposing warlords and their forces.	Developer KOEI has really pulled out all the stops. If the sight of fork lightning scattering battalions of the enemy army into the air doesn't impress, the increase of characters on screen from 100 to 500 should.	Not very high. Although more of a pure RTS than say, <i>Dropship</i> , <i>Kessen II</i> should retain a highly dynamic console feel if it's anything like the first game.	The novel idea of bending reality and incorporating an element of magic should spice up what is, let's be honest, a less than gripping scenario for gamers in the West.	<i>Kessen II</i> 's armies will start their campaign in Japan this Winter. <i>OPS2</i> hopes for a similar UK invasion early in 2002.
Dropship	In this futuristic tactical actioner you pilot a troop carrier, taking soldiers and supplies from an orbiting command post to a frontline base. It's up to you to support the army then tackle the enemy yourself.	The images released so far overwhelm the desire not to use the cliché 'breath-taking'. Graphics that belong to a next-gen title, with huge environments and superb looking hunks of airborne military hardware.	Zero. SCE's RTS/action title is debuting on PS2 and looks way too cool to be born on a PC.	It's an intriguing premise and there should be more than enough rip-roaring action to lure even traditionally RTS-phobic gamers.	Dropping from the skies some time around September.
Age of Empires 2	The hugely successful PC RTS is coming to PS2. Start out with a bunch of haly peasants banging stones together and encourage them to build an empire capable of taking on the world.	Not exactly jaw dropping, but what is lost in realism is made up for in sheer detail: from camels and elephants to siege engines, to windmills and fruit trees. All the ingredients for a kick-ass empire.	Quite high. This is a franchise that was born on the PC and has that mouse-friendly, desktop feel running all the way through it.	If <i>Command and Conquer</i> 's war torn isometric world view can find an audience on the PSone, then <i>Age of Empires 2</i> 's chances on PS2 are looking pretty good.	Megalomania in a box will be with you in March-ish.
Robot Warlords	Giant mechanoids overthrow the Japanese government. In a desperate attempt to regain control of the riot-ridden streets the suits in bunkers give the order to fight back with their own killer 'bots.	The action takes place more in FMV than it does 'in yer face' but it's impressive nonetheless.	The geeks of the world will love it. Big toys! Big guns! Power! Oh, the POWER! They'll never tell me what to do again! Never! I am King! Kneel before me and worship geekdom. Etc.	Maybe. There are many mech games jostling for a share of the market but with its take on RTS, it should find a few friends out there in the mysterious herd that is the game buying public.	If things stay on target then we could be looking as early as May.



in japan

Edited by Max Everingham



A DOG'S LIFE

With technology it seems that every thing gets left in the past, even dog shows. We paid a visit to Tokyo's AIBO expo – Japan's own cyber-Crufts.

HELD OVER THE New Year holidays, AIBO Expo 2001 in Tokyo resembled a petting zoo – except there were no bad smells and no nasty messes left by disgraced animals. The exhibition hall wasn't the norm that you'd expect for such a show either. Featuring futuristic furniture and multiple monitors, visitors wandered amongst the 'pens' to have a good look at Sony's mechatronic marvel and contemplate whether they'd part with their cash for them.

As well as displaying the latest model of the fur-free pet, visitors to the show were treated to a display of the early prototype history that led up to the current model. To give the AIBO more personality it was possible to visit a photo gallery depicting the irresistibly cute combination of plastic and microchips posing in all sorts of exotic settings.

On sale for the equivalent of £960, AIBO isn't exactly cheap, but for considerably less, smitten fans could get a range of spin-off merchandise. T-shirts, bags, mugs and mouse mats came courtesy of presumably famous Japanese designers – even the Designers Republic (of PSone's *WipeOut* fame) had a hand in a rather smart logo and sticker sheet.

The general consensus of the crowds that gathered to take a look at technology's answer to a dog was that it's rather cute in a high tech way as it plays with a ball and mimics all sorts of pet behaviour. Boasting voice recognition, the second generation pet can respond to commands or even disobey them deliberately. But worryingly, more than a few units didn't respond at all to people asking them to 'sit'. A technical flaw or a simulation of a common pet trait? You be the judge. ☐ ME

BIG GAME!

SEWINDER MAX

Fresh out from ASMIK Entertainment is this good-looking flight combat simulation where the 'Max' bit stands for 'maximum difficulty'. No slouch in the sim department, this PS2 title has moved some way from the simplistic flight models console gamers have come to expect and presents quite a challenge to escape from missions unscathed.



GAME PREVIEW



SUPER GALDELIC HOUR

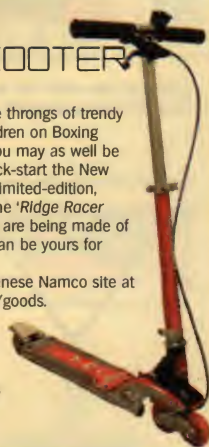
Taking first prize in the game genre re-categorization contest, Enix proudly announces *Super Galdelic Hour* to sex-starved adolescents everywhere. Part 'endless diversion' game, part 'swimming performer tournament' (yes, you heard right), SGH is a PS2 music

action party game centred on a fictitious television contest featuring girls dubbed 'QTS' ('Cuties' - geddit?) But actually it's just another excuse for desperate geeks to get their rocks off playing as the scantily-clad, large-breasted girls. Obviously.

GADGET

RIDGE SCOOTER

If you're going to join the throngs of trendy new commuters (or children on Boxing Day) on their scooters you may as well be as hip as you can be. Kick-start the New Year with Namco's new limited-edition, game-themed scooter, the 'Ridge Racer 2001 Type R'. Only 1,000 are being made of this little beauty and it can be yours for ¥29,800 (£175). Check it out on the Japanese Namco site at www.namco.co.jp/home/goods.



Just be careful not to get run over... Snarl.

PS2 CHARTS

JAPANESE TOP 10



Give them a machine as powerful as the PS2 and what do they play on it? *Guitar Freaks*.

1. **GUITAR FREAKS 3RD MIX** (Konami)
2. **FIFA 2001 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP** (EA/Square)
3. **SEWINDER MAX** (ASMIK)
4. **I'M A COACH!** (Enix)
5. **SUNRISE HEROIC STORY** (Eiyuutan/Sunrise Interactive)
6. **G1 JOCKEY 2** (Koel)
7. **MOTO GP** (Namco)
8. **DANCE SUMMIT 2001** (Enix)
9. **EXTREME RACING SSX** (EA/Square)
10. **GEKIKUKAN PRO-BASEBALL** (Square)

*Chart source: Weekly Famitsu PS2 (26/12/2000)

30 DAYS IN TOKYO

A MONTH IN THE LIFE OF OPS2'S MAN IN JAPAN, MAX EVERINGHAM

Day 1 (4 December): Went to the local mall today in search of fresh arcade action. Engaged in prolonged stand-off with aging (bet I can have him) security guard who forbids me taking pictures of the new Jap gaming goodies. Ignore ticking off, so guard stands right in front of me trying to block view. Sneaky.

Day 2: Go to store and purchase platform shoes, that are currently all the rage in Tokyo due to the Para Para Europop phenomenon. Return to arcade and gloat as can now see over security guard's obstructive hat.

Preliminary tests suggest platform shoes theory might just work.



Day 6: Massive new mall – French, of all things – just opened in local neighbourhood. Headed out to scout the scene and am gratified to see it has a hypermarket with a huge game section. Huzzah! Also had a Pioneer PDP50 plasma screen with a price label that read ¥350,000 (£2,050). Got to the cash register only to find out that the 'one' was obscured – it was, in fact, ¥1,350,000 (£7,909). Reluctantly forgot about Pioneer PDP50 plasma screen TV.

Day 10: Loads of great games released here tomorrow, so it'll be off to the shops to buy myself a Christmas present or three. Sharp press conference held today to announce they're dropping the prices of their LCD televisions so nip into the nearest 'conbin' (convenience store) on the way home to get some writing paper. On stationery headed 'cute panda let's enjoy happy together life', I write new letter to Santa. 'One extra PS2 controller, one pair gloves, one Sharp 20-inch LCD screen...'

Day 20: Gah! Konami trick me yet again! Rush out to buy *Jikkyou World Soccer 2000 Final Edition*, only to find that it's an update of the last game and not the real ISS. The new game will be on the shelves in March.

Day 23: The Japanese may not celebrate Christmas quite like we do, but it's still been as quiet as the grave, lately. Going into hibernation for a couple of weeks till the pace picks up.



'Dear Santa, I've been a really good boy...'

INVENTORY

Your one-stop guide to the PS2 power-ups.



SHIELDS

Shields? What are they?

Any clothing or device that comes between you and the fatal hail of bullets, death rays, disuptor beams or zombie gunk launched your way by the 'enemy' du jour thus reducing the damage to your soft fleshy self.

You mean like first-aid packs?

No, Medikits patch up the gory holes caused by the failure to get a shield/armour before setting out to vanquish trigger happy injustice. In short, think prevention not cure.

What does this protection look like?

In the case of body armour (Quake, TimeSplitters, Unreal Tournament) usually like a cable-stitch jumper made from real cable. Failing that, a spangly thingummybob that transforms (upon contact) into an armament-impeding force field (think of the Shield Belt featured in Unreal).

Are they hard to find?

Surprisingly not. But in the 'free-lunch' theory of power-ups, frequency comes at a cost. Body armour won't make you immune from a dose of flak cannon. It'll just delay an inevitable pummelling. Force fields are tougher, but they have the life span of a fruitfly.



WinBack's stealthy shooting is obviously Metal Gear-inspired.

SCAT MAN JEAN

Join the anti-terrorist elite in Operation WinBack.

DEVELOPER KOEI IS having considerable PlayStation 2 success at the moment, with Samurai sim Kessen (reviewed on page 110) and the enjoyable arcade-style army battling of Dynasty Warriors 2. Operation WinBack is the latest action adventure to appear from the respected Japanese programmers, but it's not exactly a 'new' title, having first materialised on the N64 last year.

The title itself is a 3D third-person shooter, starring SCAT agent Jean-Luc Cougar, who must hunt down a group of evil terrorists who have just taken control of a particularly powerful military satellite. Gameplay is straightforward, with missions involving a sliver of sneakery, elementary lever pushing and laser trap-avoiding, combined with a sizeable portion of

realistic gun-toting action against various grunts, snipers and end-of-level bosses. Weapons are plentiful, containing the usual smattering of machine guns, grenades, mounted guns (with first-person view) and shotguns – all controlled with a handy laser-sight aiming system that homes in on the closest assailant. Jean-Luc can run, duck and do Starsky and Hutch-style forward rolls, but his party trick is backing up to a wall or crate, then popping out and shooting surprised foes before they have any chance to retaliate.

Graphics are what you'd expect for the PS2, showing off accomplished character animation with detailed backgrounds, although the similar level settings of deserted factory warehouses and outdoor storage depots aren't the most

imaginative ever conceived. One major irritation that has unfortunately survived from the N64 incarnation is the dodgy camera, which seems to fight constantly against you, handing enemies a distinct advantage if they spring an ambush.

However, Operation WinBack has plenty to enjoy with superb training levels, an addictive Story mode supported by atmospheric cut-scenes and smooth, fast games for up to four players containing old favourites such as deathmatches and team battles. KOEI's Operation WinBack is instantly playable and will be an excellent precursor for PS2 gamers before MGS2 arrives later in the year. The game is currently being translated into English, with a UK release confirmed by publisher Midas Interactive this March. Preview next month. □ JS

PS2 CHARTS

The movers and shakers in the UK PlayStation 2 Top 10.



TITLE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER
1. SSX	EA Sports	EA Sports Big
2. FIFA 2001	EA Sports	EA Sports
3. TIMESPLITTERS	Free Radical Design	Eidos
4. TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT	Namco	SCEE
5. DEAD OR ALIVE 2	Tecmo	SCEE
6. SILENT SCOPE	KCE Studios	Konami
7. SMUGGLER'S RUN	Angel Studios	Rockstar
8. X-SQUAD	EA/Square	Electronic Arts
9. F1 CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON 2000	EA/Visual Sciences	EA Sports
10. KESSEN	KOEI	Electronic Arts

*PS2 Charts © ELSPA/Compiled By Chart-Track (w/e 30/12/00)

#1: SSX

A welcome surge from the dark, snow boarding horse that is SSX has made it to the top slot at last. One of the contenders for 'best PS2 launch title', SSX is wowing punters with its spectacular gameplay, sumptuous graphics and unbridled, phat air fun.



#5: DEAD OR ALIVE 2

DOA2 makes its debut in the middle of the table this month meeting its arch rival in the beat-'em-up stakes, Tekken Tag, on the way down from the top spot. It would appear that DOA2's brand of brash, bouncy fight action is hitting a chord with John Q Public.



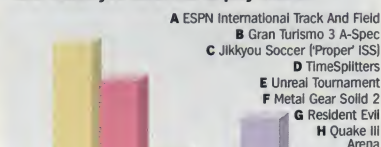
#7: SMUGGLER'S RUN

Rockstar's law-breaking title is continuing to make steady progress towards the top of the chart. Smuggler's Run is, like SSX, an unheralded title that is gaining quite a following, providing some of the most arresting thrills on PS2.

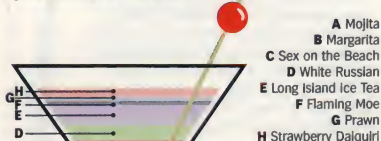
FACT BELCH

WE set the questions. YOU give the answers.

QUESTION: We asked 25 gamers: "Which PS2 title would you most like to play online?"



QUESTION: We asked the same people: "What is your favourite cocktail?"



*Source: A random sample of reader replies to PS2@futurenet.co.uk



ILLUSTRATION: MR JAGO

WORLD IN ACTION

Developer Proksim Software gives an exciting peek at the future of PS2 online gaming.

LATER THIS YEAR, SONY will unveil their Hard Disk Drive/Broadband expansion unit, that as well as fitting snugly into that large empty port on the back of your PlayStation 2, will herald a new era in online console gaming. All the major PS2 developers are already looking at ways future titles such as *Gran Turismo 4* and *Final Fantasy XI* can utilise the storage and network facilities, but what will this mean for gamers?

OPS2 talked with Kenneth Trueman, Product Marketing Manager of US and Canada-based Proksim Software, maker of forthcoming NetZ 'middleware'.

"Basically, NetZ provides developers with all the time-consuming programming for the network aspect of their title, allowing them to concentrate on what they do best – game concepts," says Trueman. "We want to develop the necessary infrastructure that would be conducive to all kinds of online games, including FPSs such as *Quake III Arena* and massive multiplayer environments, as in the RPG *Everquest*."

So what can PlayStation 2 owners expect with the advent of network gaming on their machine? "Well, the PS2 NetZ allows developers to make cross-platform games, so you could have a PS2 playing against a PC or other consoles. The PS2 can most definitely

compete with the latest high-end PCs." Trueman has also confirmed that the PS2 was capable of 'peer-to-peer communication'. "What this means is server-less online games, so a PlayStation 2 owner will be able to host a game and have other people connect to him." This is tremendous news for PS2 gamers. It means that instead of having to join an existing commercial server to play, for example an online football game, you can set up your own World Cup competition from your living room. "You can have three or four friends around a TV sharing that gaming experience, but what's even more fun is to play against other groups of friends around their TVs," continues Trueman. "You can be on a network and have the console interaction of real teams going up against each other – the best of both worlds."

But can games machines such as the PS2 eventually dominate the online gaming community? "In the US it might take a little bit longer than in Europe, where you'll definitely see more people moving on to consoles. The main advantage with the PS2 is that all the games have the same performance – that's very reassuring. There's a definite shift going on in the games market towards consoles, because you can say

"Hey, two months ago I spent £1,200 on a Pentium 733 and it's already outclassed!" You can buy a PS2 today and you may not see many network games for a year, but when that day comes along you're going to be as well off as the people who buy the machine then."

One of the major problems with accessibility of Internet gaming at the present time on PCs is that the machines can often 'crash out' when a connection is lost, meaning that the frustrated user has to reload the game and start again. Not with the PS2. "We offer 'full tolerance', which means that if your machine crashes out for some reason, other players can still keep the game going and you can even come back to the game where you left off – all done automatically. It's a lot more stable than a lot of current PC networks."

With plans for a massive multiplayer version of NetZ that can host up to 100,000 players, Kenneth Trueman and the Proksim team believe they're prepared for the coming revolution on the PS2 and beyond. "Online games are the future. Nothing can beat the fact that you're playing against another human being, whatever the quality of the AI. These really are exciting times." □ JS

*For more information, check out www.proksim.com

BLOOD IS THICKER THAN WATER

Crystal Dynamics reveals more details on its post-death sequel to *Blood Omen*.

TRY AND FOLLOW us here, but this is how the *Legacy Of Kain* time line has evolved over the years. First there was *Legacy Of Kain: Blood Omen* starring Kain. Then came *Legacy Of Kain: Soul Reaver* in which Raziel (one of Kain's damned sons) sought revenge on his father. Then, sequels to both *Blood Omen* and *Soul Reaver* were simultaneously announced. *Soul Reaver's* sequel was duly expected after the shocking cliff-hanger of *Soul Reaver* but a sequel to *Blood Omen*? Could gamers actually get excited about the sequel to a 1996 top-down RPG-style game?

On a recent trip to California to snoop around Crystal Dynamics' offices, Bret Robbins, the game's Senior Designer, told us he likes to think so. "*Blood Omen II* is essentially a vampire game. The player will have the visceral experience of playing a powerful vampire among a world of mortals. Players can look forward to believable character interaction, beautiful and reactive environments, an exciting and 'superhuman' combat system, and a great cinematic story line." He's right to be so positive. Brief glimpses of the game revealed something utterly different from the *Soul Reaver* games that have held our attention for the past couple of years. *Blood Omen II* is more reminiscent of *Tenchu*, as Kain sneaks through the city of Meridian (Nosgoth's capital city) luring maidens into alleys to suck their blood before scuttling off into the shadows.

"Of course, one of our main concerns is making an action adventure game in the *Legacy Of Kain* series while not being too derivative of *Soul Reaver*," says Robbins when questioned about possible similarities between the two franchises. "We've taken our setting from the original *Blood Omen* game and fast-forwarded a few hundred years while still holding true to the original story of the Pillars of Nosgoth and the *Soul Reaver*. Most of the game centres on Kain in Meridian and the interaction with its inhabitants. Kain will have to meet new allies and face new challenges in his struggle to regain control of his own and Nosgoth's destinies." The game will also feature a more advanced control method. "*Blood Omen II* has a fantastic combat system. We have sword-to-sword attacks and blocking, combo moves, weapon specific special attacks, stealth kills and dozens of different types of enemies." Kain actually parries with opponents now, countering high blows then plunging his hand into their chests to pluck out their hearts. What a guy.

Blood Omen II is published by Eidos and lined up for a release in December. ☐ BL



The sword attacks in *Blood Omen II* are pretty gory. This bodes, um, well for the rest of the game.

shorts

»US company Seagate Technology has signed a contract to become the primary producer of PS2 Hard Disk Drives. The company will manufacture an internal unit and a freestanding external drive in order to cater for the different HDD interfaces found in the Japanese and Western PS2 models.

»Meanwhile another US company, Conexant, has won the contract to provide the chips necessary for manufacturers to produce dedicated PS2 modems. Capcom and Konami are already planning Conexant-compatible, Internet-enabled versions of their respective games.

»AOL has started preliminary negotiations with Sony regarding the creation of a Broadband portal for PS2 users in the USA. If talks are successful, AOL would provide American PS2 users with their own email and Web features (Check out the Proksim interview on page 59 for online gaming news).

»Dead or Alive is coming to the big screen. Mindfire Entertainment has snapped up the film rights to Tecmo's brash beat-'em-up series. Mindfire is aiming for an inclusive PG-13 rating although how this will square with the violence and female flesh on display in the game is yet to be seen.

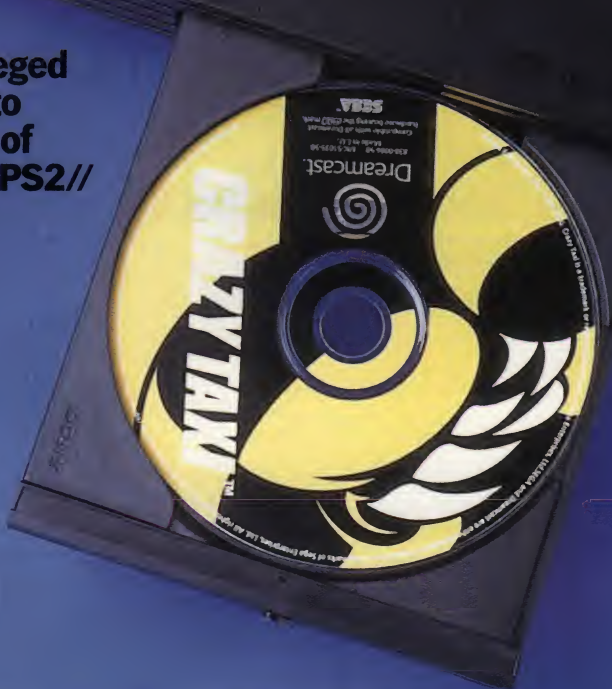
»DreamCatcher Interactive, the long standing PC game developer behind franchises like *Dracula - The Resurrection*, *Beyond Atlantis* and *Crystal Key* has reached an agreement with Sony to develop titles for PS2.

»Infogrames has bought Hasbro Interactive in a deal that gives them the publishing rights to 60 titles in development, including *Grand Prix 4* for the PS2. Not only will Infogrames gain access to brands like Monopoly and Action Man but a slice of MicroProse titles (including God sim *Civilization*) and the retro Atari franchises such as *Missile Command*.

»SCEJ is to release *Phase Paradox*, an intriguing sci-fi mystery game, in Japan this March. Based on a stranded ship crippled by planetary explosion, you play one of three survivors attempting to solve the puzzle of why the planet blew up. Switching between characters in over 400 different event scenes the game aims to draw the player into a movie experience.

PHOTOGRAPHY: MICHAEL DANNENBERG

//Acclaim is alleged to have a deal to bring a handful of Sega games to PS2//



Don't try this at home! It won't work and may damage your credibility (and your console).

SEGA AND SONY SITTING A TREE?

Could *Sonic the Hedgehog* appear on PlayStation 2?

RECENT STRONG RUMOURS circulating the industry have suggested that Sega is allowing third-party publishers to release their games on other formats - including the PS2. Acclaim is alleged to have a deal to bring a handful of Sega titles to various game platforms, with a PS2 *Crazy Taxi* scheduled for release within the next 12 months.

Currently, all official sources indicate that the story is false. An Acclaim spokesperson commented that, "It's all industry hearsay. Don't pay any attention to it." An insider at Sega mirrored this, saying "The rumours derive from a Sega press release stating that it is ready to develop on other platforms. What that actually meant was new technology platforms such as WAP phones and so on. People misread that release to assume the other platforms meant PS2, etc. That is not the case." Sega has also been keen to stop related rumours that Nintendo was set to buy out the games giant, which was "derived from the same series of mistaken assumptions."

But could a Sega to Sony conversion be a possibility? After all, Sega titles such as *Sonic the Hedgehog* have appeared on PCs and the now-defunct SNK Neo Geo in the past. Jon Oldham, ex-VP of Development at Infogrames and owner of Zed

Two and Fluid Studios believes so: "From Dreamcast to PS2? Of course it can be done. It wouldn't be easy, though." Eric Elms, Business Development Director of Warthog, believes that such a move is highly desirable, "We're not going to get Nintendo's GameCube or Microsoft's Xbox by next Christmas. So between them, Sega and Sony have the new console market tied up for the next 12 months. Who would benefit most? Sega financially, and Sony for a short-term boost to their PS2 games catalogue."

Even sources at Eldos, UK publisher of huge titles such as *Tomb Raider*, believe that such a move might be a logical one: "I cannot see Sega launching new hardware in the future, based on the disappointing performance of their last few consoles. They should therefore concentrate on what they do best - producing excellent games." As for Sony, a spokesperson said that the company, "Respect and acknowledge that Sega make very high quality arcade titles, and as such would welcome them on PS2. If it was to happen it'd show that Sega recognise, that of all the consoles, PS2 is the best platform for them to offer the highest quality gaming experience to the consumer." OPS2 will watch this story closely for further developments. [E] PR



Industry tittle-tattle suggests *Crazy Taxi* may soon pick up PS2's fare.

BLUE LINES

Take 2 Interactive (*Midnight Club*, *Smuggler's Run*) have bought the *Duke Nukem* franchise and will be working with creator 3D Realms on a new PS2 *Duke* title »Punters in Japan who reserve Capcom's budget-busting, feudal epic adventure *Onimusha* will receive a 'making of' DVD containing CG movies, clips and interviews with the producers »Namco is releasing a future-based strategic RPG called *Volfoss* in Japan on 22 February, where mercenary troops have to conquer newly-discovered worlds for power and profit.





ONE OF THE FEW American PSone titles that caused a commotion in Japanese gaming circles was *Crash Bandicoot* – even Nintendo's Shigeru Miyamoto was caught on camera enjoying a session. The gloriously playable adventures starred a bright orange bandicoot with attitude and were stuffed with cartoony graphics, excellent mini-games and imaginative level design. After three successful outings on PSone (plus a *Crash* kart racer), original developer Naughty Dog left its world-famous character to owners, Universal Interactive.

Building on the recent publishing deal between Universal and Konami, the Japanese giant has now assumed publishing duties from SCE, with UK developer Traveller's Tales taking up the PS2 programming reins after coding such visually-accomplished games as *Rascal* for PSone. Universal Interactive's Producer Daniel Suarez assures fans that the series is in capable hands: "The gameplay that Naughty Dog created was fantastic. We're just building upon that to bring it to the next level." PS2's *Crash Bandicoot* will be packed with new moves, bizarre new characters, mind-bending puzzles

Crash is as playable as ever with the addition of eye-popping 3D graphics.

CRASH LANDING

The biggest and baddest bandicoot bounds onto PlayStation 2.

and bigger, more involving environments, "but we're still playing upon the core elements of *Crash*," says Suarez.

These colourful screenshots confirm Traveller's Tales' assured grasp of producing gorgeous graphics, with the developer promising snow worlds, lava worlds and even a level on a vast lake of liquid mercury. *Crash*'s beloved Wumpa fruit are ripe, trademark TNT crates are lying in wait for a mistimed spin attack and even his glamorous sister Coco now appears as a fully playable character. Gamers will get access to a range of cool vehicles – such as the spaceship from *Crash 2* – plus the infamous chase sequences make a welcome return, pitting the bad bandicoot against fast-moving avalanches and other environmental hazards.

Gameplay is promised to be as simple and addictive as previous games starring the New Guinea native, with a pick-up-and-play arcade aesthetic that will ensure PS2 gamers can throw themselves effortlessly into the lush 3D world. Konami's next-generation *Crash Bandicoot* is scheduled for an autumn release in the UK and should be one of PS2's premier titles.

As for Naughty Dog, the Los Angeles-based developer has been busy since the March 1999 launch of PS2, working on a top secret game to be published by SCE. No details have been announced about this potentially explosive Christmas 2001 hit, but OPS2 will bring you an exclusive report on the Dogs' new title in May. Watch this space. □ JS

* Thanks to Edge and Next Gen magazines.



//Trademark TNT crates are lying in wait for a mistimed spin attack//

COIN-OP

With **Guy Woodward** Editor of coin-op bible *AB Europe*.

A LA I-MODE

The Japanese mobile phone phenomenon shows no sign of slowing down. Can arcade game manufacturers hit the right tones?

AS THE TRADITIONAL coin-op market struggles to compete with emerging technologies, online gameplay and the increasingly sophisticated consumer sector, many manufacturers are now providing content for alternative applications. And with the Japanese continually fascinated by the mobile phone craze – research shows many teenagers have two models – one format is winning out.

Here's an example. When office arguments spiral into deadlock, anything can be sorted out with a bout

of Paper, Scissors, Stone. For disagreements over distance, however, Taito has the answer – a networked, real-time eight-player phone tournament version. While it takes away some of the youthful innocence of Paper, Scissors, Stone, it does at least prevent the cheating of the past.

Elsewhere, Tecmo has developed *Love Wagon*, based on the Japanese TV programme, for i-Mode phones. The player's personal character joins a group of six others on a wagon ride around the

world and receives emails from his character with updates of its progress.

Finally, both Pacific Century CyberWorks Japan – previously Jaleco – and Capcom have sited cabinets from which players can download ring-tones and photos of themselves to display on their phones or send to pals. Res! ring-tones? Shudder... **GW**



All nine mobile phones ring at once and confusion reigns.



lost classics

Games of coin-ops past.



24 PAC-MAN (1980)
The original 'Puck-Man' was inspired from an advert in which a smiley pizza face ran around the TV screen eating and making a 'puku-puku' noise. But with the obvious temptation for Eighties youth to scratch out part of the P, Namco wisely amended the export, which had already led to a shortage of ¥100 coins in Japan. The result was an order book of over 300,000 units.



Smashing Drive (left) and Arctic Thunder (above).

THE DRIVE OF YOUR LIFE

New arcade racers change gear.

People say driving games aren't what they used to be. Gone are the days of burning rubber over countless laps of the racetrack. In fact gone are the days of burning rubber, if Midway's latest is anything to go by. *Arctic Thunder* pits players in the role of a snowmobile driver speeding through a selection of surreal arctic landscapes from a Chernobyl meltdown zone to a lost Himalayan city. As if that wasn't enough, a gust of cold air blows in the player's face while the interactive seat shaker simulates the motion of the ride. Guaranteed for a PS2 appearance, see page 92 for more on Midway's arcade conversions.

On the other hand Gaelco's latest racer, *Smashing Drive*, replicates a frenzied taxi ride through urban New York. Actual streets don't feature too heavily though as short cuts through car parks and shopping precincts are positively encouraged. Almost any route can be taken, opening the way to launching off flyovers onto the Statue of Liberty.



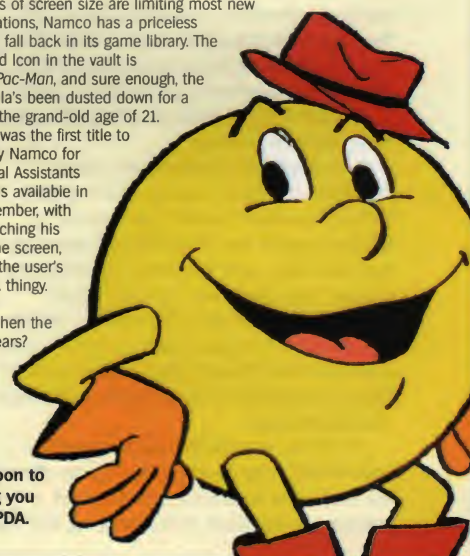
FUTURE RETRO

Namco's yellow pizza pie pops pills on PDAs.

There's a certain cool to all things retro, and what better way to harness it than via the latest mobile gadgetry. While the restrictions of screen size are limiting most new format applications, Namco has a priceless commodity to fall back in its game library. The most treasured icon in the vault is undoubtedly *Pac-Man*, and sure enough, the little yellow fella's been dusted down for a comeback at the grand-old age of 21.

Pac-Man was the first title to be released by Namco for Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) and was available in Japan in December, with our hero munching his way around the screen, controlled by the user's little pen-stick thingy. What price an appearance when the PS2 PDA appears?

Pac-Man. Soon to be annoying you again on a PDA.





Reports that Saddam Hussein is playing *Missile Command* on his PS2 have been greatly exaggerated...

ILLUSTRATION: LOUISE WALLACE

WARGAMES

Is Iraq really stockpiling PS2s to control missiles? OPS2 investigates...

ACCORDING TO NUMEROUS stories across the ever-reliable World Wide Web, a threat to world peace has come from an unlikely source – the PlayStation 2. WorldNetDaily.com is one Web site that ran a hysterical story on 19 December 2000 claiming that the reason many American children couldn't get a PS2 for Christmas, was that Iraq had been buying the machines.

According to the American site's military intelligence sources as many as 4000 PlayStation 2s had been purchased in the US and shipped to Saddam Hussein. Why? WorldNetDaily's source said that applications were "potentially frightening" after speaking to an expert who estimated that an integrated bundle of 12-15 PlayStation 2s could provide enough computer power to control an Iraqi Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) – a pilotless aircraft. These are apparently a possible device for delivering chemical weapons.

So is there any truth in these frankly bizarre scare stories? OPS2 decided to find out the official line. First on the list was our own Ministry of Defence, who had heard of the claims, but were very

sceptical. "Well, it's difficult to say what Saddam Hussein is up to," said MOD spokesperson Clare Cridland. "There isn't much mileage in the story though. If Iraq wants to find them, there are much more powerful computers than PlayStation 2." SCEE believe the stories may emanate from a story in the Asahi newspaper in Japan, claiming the company wouldn't be able to export the machine because it could be used for military purposes. "The UK DTI has already confirmed that the PS2 doesn't require any special export licenses. The only restrictions are for countries with existing embargoes, such as Libya," said a SCEE representative. So what about Saddam Hussein himself?

//“This is the kind of campaign that only idiots would believe” – Muhadfar Amin of the Iraqi embassy//

OPS2 rang the Iraqi Embassy in London and after a jovial chat with the receptionist, had a lengthy and friendly interview with Mudhafar Amin, Head of the Iraqi Interest Section. "This is a campaign that Idiots would believe," he laughed. "They say all sorts of things. That we can't import pencils because Iraq will use the lead for bullets – that sort of thing" Mudhafar explained that videogaming is extremely popular in Iraq, despite the sanctions. "The young have PlayStations in Baghdad and play games such as *Tekken*. We have internet and gaming cafes in little districts all over the country. These PlayStation 2 stories are just propaganda to keep Iraqis isolated."

The truth is that PlayStation 2s are appearing in Iraq, but mainly to sell at a profit to eager Arab gamers. A news story in *The Guardian* on 3 January said one London-based Iraqi recently brought back a PS2 for his son from Baghdad, saying that the machine was cheaper there. Having just seen playable demos of *GT3: A-Spec* and *MGS2*, there's no wonder that Saddam Hussein is desperate to get his hands on a Dual Shock 2. □ JS



LOOK! IT'S ME! IN A PS2 GAME! YES! How to get your ugly mug into Golf Paradise DX.



1. Grab someone to take three photographs of your face showing happy, sad and normal expressions with a Picture Paradise-compatible digital camera – OPS2 used the Sony DSC-P1. Connect the camera to the PS2 via the USB port and *Golf Paradise DX* will automatically load the pictures.



2. Map the face to any in-game character, using a simple editor. Match the three black circles with the eyes and mouth on the photo to create a perfect fit. Repeat the process for all three expressions, then save the trio of grimaces to Memory Card.



3. Now all you have to do is go back into the game and play. The *Golf Paradise DX* game automatically switches between the three expressions depending on how you are performing. Fantastic.

IF THE FACE FITS...

OPS2 enjoys a bit of a giggle linking a digital camera to the PlayStation 2.



If you're buying a digital camera, make sure it's PictureParadise-compatible like the Cyber shot.



YOU KNOW THE FEELING. You're enjoying a game of *TimeSplitters*, mowing down alien scum with a stream of plasma energy, when a thought enters your head, 'If only I could import faces of all my friends and family into the game so I could shoot them too.' Well, soon that beautiful dream could become a reality. OPS2 successfully linked a new Sony digital camera to a PS2 game – and can happily report that it works brilliantly.

A new Japanese version of *Golf Paradise DX* (known as *Swing Away Golf* in the UK) has a great new ability to put faces captured on a Picture Paradise-compatible camera into the game. So, OPS2 'borrowed' a £700 DSC-P1 Cyber shot digital camera from Sony, took some shots of our beautiful fizzes and connected the camera to the PS2 via the USB port. *Golf Paradise DX* loads in the pictures and you can then edit the in-game characters and slap

yours, or better still someone else's, stupid face on them. Hey and presto – the entire OPS2 team join in for a quick round of virtual golf.

The fact it works so well without any problems is great news for the future of PS2 gaming. Konami's 'proper' ISS football title out in Japan in March is set to have this facility, so you could actually be the perfect England striker in place of Owen. First-person shooters such as *Unreal Tournament* and *TimeSplitters* are the obvious choice of genre to include a face-mapping utility (as in PC titles) but it's risky politically and could spark further furore about violence in videogames – especially in the USA. However, OPS2 reckons the most fun you could have with this technology, would be to photograph a certain part of the anatomy and import that into any compatible PS2 title. The phrase 'has a face like an arse' could therefore be used in an entirely accurate context. □ JS

BLUE LINES

The *Sunday Times*'s list of top 500 earners included some notable names from the games industry including Argonaut Games' boss Jez San at number 38 (£24.3 million) and Codemasters' Darling brothers at joint 263rd (£3.1 million apiece) » EA is going to produce a sequel to its POne vehicular Bond-fest *007 Racing* on PS2 » 989 Studios is preparing Gabe for a new mission in the next-gen *Syphon Filter 3* scheduled for late 2001 » Goblin fans unite! Unix confirm FF rival *DragonQuest* for PS2, with online compatibility planned

WINGING IT

The *Ace Combat* franchise lands on PlayStation 2.

FOLLOWING ON FROM the news concerning classy RPG 7: *The Cavalry of Molmorth* (page 51), Namco's other major announcement is that their long-running critically acclaimed POne arcade flight-sim series is to appear on the PS2.

Ace Combat 4 is a stunning-looking title that draws upon the increased graphics power of PlayStation 2 to create state-of-the-art jet fighters (reproduced from actual aircraft) that soar and scream through breathtaking photo-realistic scenery. The action takes place in the near future, two years after the third POne installment, when a sudden meteor shower has pock-marked the Earth with craters, causing chaos and devastating war between various world powers.

Namco has included over 20 missions ranging from tense stealth operations to rip-roaring multiple dogfights with intelligent enemy pilots. *Ace Combat 4*'s hangar of aircraft all handle differently, so smaller planes are fast and manoeuvrable, whereas others are heavy, graceless bulks that handle like a rudder-less Zeppelin. The extra control sensitivity of Dual Shock 2 has been fully implemented to make the experience an even more realistic simulation of flight, while retaining the accessible arcade blasting and a particularly tidy first-person cockpit view.



Don't expect a dry PC-style flight sim – Namco's air combat title will be a seat-of-your-trews arcade blast.

Although there are no plans for multiplayer levels, there is an excellent replay mode that displays sexy 3D footage of your Biggles-inspired escapades, showing every missile trail and fiery explosion of enemy craft. From these impressive screenshots, *Ace Combat 4* should surpass the visual stylings of Namco's more down-to-earth game *Ridge Racer V* when this DVD release takes off and flies into the horizon this autumn. □ JS

*More AC4 Info at: www.namco.co.jp/home/cs/ps2/acecombat4/index.html



THE BEAUTIFUL

OPS2 continues the search for the ultimate in PlayStation 2 gaming gold. Fourth in our righteous series? The most addictive puzzle game ever!

1. Blindingly colourful, gaudy Japanese-style graphics that induce mild fits and headaches after only a couple of nano-seconds play.

2. It should feature the simplistic, addictive falling blocks of Tetris mixed with the balloon-popping insanity of Bust-A-Move combined with the funky pyrotechnics of Fantavision.

3. A selection of incredibly cute day-glo pink and green cat/mouse/dinosaur characters, with enormous anime saucer eyes. Other more 'adult' characters are available too, including aliens, zombies and footballers.

4. Incessantly repetitive happy bleepy music repeating on an eight-second loop. Designed to get inside your head and whisk your brain violently until it's liquefied goo. As the game speeds up so does the music's beat.

5. Inspired frantic multiplayer in-yr-face madness with up to four players taking part - as in the Dreamcast's ChuChu Rocket.

6. A 'nuke-em' option, similar to the Redeemer missile in Unreal Tournament that allows you to obliterate your opponent with a burst of deadly explosive.

7. A replay option à la Fantavision, that allows free-floating, spectacular three-dimensional views of the game set in different themes such as 'Day Time', 'Night Time' and 'Psychedelic Vietnam Flashback'.

8. The addictive feature of being able to collect character cards, as in the superb SNK game Puzzle Link 2 that appeared on the now-defunct Neo Geo Pocket.

9. A Quake III Arena ability of being able to enrage your opponents with insulting and offensive taunts each time you win a level.

10. Online compatibility for cross-continent competitions.

11. A groovy option that allows you to change the rules as you go along, giving you a huge advantage over smug friends in multiplayer games.

12. Compatibility with various controllers including the microphone from Talto's voice-activated footie game Greatest Striker, to enable ridiculous shouts and swearing to affect the on-screen action. Also compatible with a mouse and keyboard, digital Webcam (motion-sensing) and Kempston joystick - for old-skool gamers.

13. A Character Story mode to add longevity and interest to what is usually just an 'instant fix' genre.

14. As you progress the game gets faster and faster - as in Tetris - until the only way you can keep up is through a state-of-the-art Sony MindStem I-Link connector that you shove directly into your cerebral cortex.

15. A cool selection of bonus mini-games such as the penalty shootouts from Konami's ISS Pro Evolution. Also gives players the option to enjoy a beat-'em-up session, where the cute manga fellas can belt seven shades out of each other.

16. Manages to pack in an alternative version of the game where players have to solve 'puzzles' based on global politics, such as the taxing 'How to Solve the Middle East Conflict' puzzle or the 'Radical Dismantling of the Mechanics of Capitalism and Establishment of a New Anarchist World Order' teaser. Or one on All Saints.



*Block dropping beats!

GAME



ILLUSTRATION: CHRIS STOCKER

PlayStation 2 RELEASE DATES

GAME NAME	GENRE	PUBLISHER
February 2001		
Armoured Core 2	Strategy/Shoot-'em-up	Ubi Soft
Knockout Kings 2001	Sports sim	EA Sports
Moto GP	Superbike racer	SCEE
MDK2 Armageddon	Adventure	Interplay
NBA Live 2001	Sports sim	Midway
7 Blades	Adventure	Konami
Silpheed	Action/Shoot-'em-up	Virgin
Stunt GP	Arcade racer	Virgin
Unreal Tournament	First-person shooter	Infogrames
Warriors Of Might & Magic	Adventure	3DO
March 2001		
Age of Empires II	RPG	Konami
Commandos 2	Strategy	Eidos
Evergrace	RPG	Ubi Soft
Formula One 2001	Racing sim	SCEE
Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec	Racing sim	SCEE
Paris Dakar Rally	Rally sim	Acclaim
Ring of Red	Strategy	Konami
Robot Warlords	Strategy/Shoot-'em-up	Midas
Shadow Of Memories	Adventure	Konami
Stunt GP	Arcade racer	Virgin
The Bouncer	RPG/Adventure	Square
WinBack	Adventure	Midas
ZOE (Zone Of The Enders)	Shoot-'em-up	Konami
April 2001		
ESPN NBA 2Night	Basketball sim	Konami
Extermination	Adventure	SCEE
Jungle Book	Adventure	Ubi Soft
Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver II	Adventure	Eidos
MDK2 Armageddon	Adventure	Interplay
MTV Music Generator 2001	Music creator	Codemasters
Oni	Adventure	Take 2
Project Eden	Adventure	Eidos
Confirmed second quarter 2001		
Big Wave Surfing	Surf sim	Acclaim
Championship Motocross 2002	Racing sim	THQ
Drop Ship	Adventure	SCEE
Gauntlet Dark Legacy	Adventure	Midway
Motor Mayhem	Racer/Shoot-'em-up	Infogrames
No One Lives Forever	First-person shooter	Fox
Quake III Revolution	First-person shooter	EA
Red Faction	First-person shooter	THQ
Sky Odyssey	Arcade flight sim	SCEE
Spy Hunter: The Return	Arcade racer	Midway
Star Wars: Starfighter	Shoot-'em-up	Activision
Star Wars: Super Bombad Racing	Arcade racer	Activision
Summoner	RPG	THQ
The Gift	Adventure	Cryo
The World Is Not Enough	First-person shooter	EA
Titanium Angels	Shoot-'em-up	SCI
UEFA 2001	Football sim	Take 2
WipeOut Fusion	Arcade racer	SCEE
World Sports Car	Racing sim	Empire Interactive
Unconfirmed third quarter 2001		
Black & White	God sim	EA
CART Fury	Arcade racer	Midway
Dark Cloud	RPG	SCEE
Ephemeral Fantasia	RPG	Konami
ESPN NHL National Hockey Night	Sports sim	Konami
Half-Life	Action	Sierra
Herdy Gerdy	Platform	Eidos
Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons Of Liberty	Adventure	Konami
Onimusha: Warlords	Adventure	Capcom
Resident Evil Code: Veronica X	Adventure	Capcom
The Getaway	Arcade racer	SCEE
UEFA Challenge	Football sim	Infogrames
Wingover 3	Flight sim	JVC
Unconfirmed fourth quarter 2001		
Army Men: Air Attack 2	Adventure	3DO
Cool Boarders: Code Alien	Snowboard sim	TBC
Crash Bandicoot	Platformer	Konami
Devil May Cry	Adventure	Capcom
Duke Nukem	Adventure	Infogrames
Gunslinger	Action	Activision
Kelly Slater: Pro Surfer	Surfing sim	Activision
Silent Hill 2	Adventure	Konami
Spyro The Dragon 4	Platformer	Hasbro
Spider-Man	Adventure	Activision
Stepping Selection	Dancing game	Jaleco
Tomb Raider: Next Gen	Adventure	Eidos
Twisted Metal Black	Arcade racer	SCEE

*Game release dates are correct at the time of going to press. All names and dates are subject to change.

THE SWEDE FOR SPEED

Motorhead 2 has a dark, brooding Blade Runner-esque atmosphere.

Blinkingly fast arcade racing in Digital Illusions' *Motorhead 2*.

THREE YEARS AGO, a talented Swedish developer crafted a well-received but highly underrated PlayStation racer, *Motorhead*. Rather than being a digital tribute to Lemmy's heavy metal combo, the game was a frantic car chase around a neon-soaked futuristic world – prompting one wag to call it "WipeOut with wheels." With the *Ridge Racer*-inspired powerslides, a selection of innovative circuits and liquid-smooth frame rate, the game earned a hardcore following of thrill-seeking petrolheads.

Speaking to *OPS2*, Digital Illusions finally announced its plans for a speedy *Motorhead* sequel that will fully utilise PlayStation 2's advanced gaming technology. "One of our major objectives is to be pioneers who create new trends in the industry," says Senior Artist Marcus Nystrom. "We'll be significantly raising the standard, and creating an automobile racing game that gives the player an experience far beyond that which is expected on PS2."

Motorhead had a sizeable collection of cool vehicles and wicked challenges, but Vice CEO Mikael Rudberg believes that the single-player game will be even more involving and addictive in the next-generation upgrade. "It'll be possible to keep your car through the whole game by continuously upgrading it with new features," he said. "Players can enjoy a co-operative team mode where the objective is for the whole team to do well as a unit, rather than as individuals."

Race opposition in the PSone original was extremely realistic, with computer-controlled drivers reacting 'live' – expect *Motorhead 2* to induce further road rage incidents as AI is dealt with by the PS2's Emotion Engine. Although still in the early stages with a possible UK release as late as September 2002, the streamlined graphics and gameplay coupled with numerous multiplayer options in the works – including pulse-quickenning split-screen competitions – should make *Motorhead 2* a blast. □ JS



Highly polished: check out *MH2*'s cool reflections.

5x5

Each issue we put five gaming questions to five gaming professionals. This month: Women and videogames.

	Do you feel that the games industry currently consists of men making videogames for other men?	Why aren't there more women doing creative jobs within games developers and publishers?	Is it a classic stereotype to say that men like violent shoot-'em-ups, whereas women like cute puzzle games?	What can developers, publishers and magazines do to get more women to play videogames?	Name a classic 'crossover' videogame that appeals to both sexes and say why.
 Vangie 'Aurora' Beal Editor of the GameGirlz Web site	Yes I do – in the area of action, racing, and 3D shooter type games. The largest visible consumer base for these games are males, and the companies making these games are a majority male developer team as well.	Like the whole tech industry, women are employed but in very small numbers. Years ago, computer and related-course classrooms had a handful of women enrolled, whereas today reports show almost half of enrollment is female. I think we'll see a shift to a more even number of women in the industry as more women finish their tech education.	It sure is! I think you could change that by simply saying "More men enjoy," just because there are women out there who enjoy a good romp with a rocket launcher as well.	They should consider the fact that there will be a woman playing or reading their product when it's released. Talk to women gamers, find out what they like about games. Hire women to assist in QA and to provide feedback before its release. I think here are many things that could be done.	Why, <i>Tetris</i> of course! Actually, games like <i>Tomb Raider</i> do as well. <i>Tomb Raider</i> has a huge sex appeal, but it's also a game with a lead female character. I know more girls who play <i>TR</i> because of the female character lead, as I do girls who refuse to play it, due to believing the character is a sexual object. <small>Check out www.gamegirlz.com</small>
 Ian Curran Managing Director of THQ	Not at all. In the past the games industry has certainly been very male-dominated, but with the broadening of the market – especially when it comes to consoles and 'lifestyle' entertainment – games are being more and more targeted at wider audiences, including girls and women.	At THQ, we actually have 50-50 split with males and females, and this extends to creative departments such as Marketing and PR. To say that there are probably less women in the development side is probably fair, but that's more an indication of the streaming that education provides.	That's probably a fair assessment in most cases, however you can't discount titles such as <i>WWF SmackDown! 2</i> which have broad appeal with males and females of all ages, particularly at the younger end of the scale.	Games are naturally becoming more open to girls and women, as the games themselves as products have wider appeal. For example snowboarding games emulate real life and have as much appeal for girls into extreme sports as they do for boys.	<i>Tomb Raider</i> is a good example. As a game with heroine to control, it has a natural interest for males, but of course provides an empathic character for get-up-'n'-go girls who are into adventure. <small>THQ's <i>Summoner</i> is out in March, while <i>Red Faction</i> is released in May 2001</small>
 Aleks Krotoski Presenter of TV programme <i>BITs</i>	On the whole, yes. But I know plenty of chicks who feel just as comfortable playing <i>Abe's Oddysee</i> as they do playing <i>Gran Turismo</i> . However, there's a fancy trend happening in Japan where publishers are tapping into the ladymarket, so perhaps we should move over there and learn a thing or two.	There are many creative jobs that aren't PR and management, but chicks are still stuck behind the telephone. Sexual balance in the art departments is pretty good, but elsewhere it sucks. I've never understood why there aren't more female creatives in development and design. They're such cool jobs and they don't require entry into the beardsy society.	Yeah I think as stereotypes go, and as much as I hate to admit it, it's pretty apt. Though I did meet a 12-year-old girl who was pretty damn good at <i>Quake III Arena</i> . And would you consider <i>Tomb Raider</i> a 'cute puzzle game'? Lara's turned more than just the lads on. Most women who come up and chat to me go on and on and on and on about her.	They're starting to do it already. The sexes are blurring, and publishers are starting to take creative leaps. We might have to wean the uninitiated on Bemanl, but once they've caught on and realised that the videogame world isn't just filled with hack 'n' slash, they'll flock. Like lambs to the slaughter.	Well, my latest personal favourite is the Commodore 64 classic, <i>Stroker</i> . Why? Well, virtual masturbation is rather funny, isn't it? <small>Check out the <i>BITs</i> Web site - www.4kiter.com/bits</small>
 Fiona Sperry Studio Head at Criterion	As there are more men in the industry, and statistically, most consumers are male, then yes. However, there are plenty of mums, wives and girlfriends out there who enjoy videogaming.	I think this is changing. In the UK this industry grew out of small groups of coders working from home. This grew from the hobbyist home micro scene. There weren't too many female coders – but anyone remember <i>Activision's River Raid</i> , written by Carol Shaw? If you look back to the Eighties, many women ran development houses.	Yes and no. I'm sure there are many girls out there who enjoy a bout of <i>Tekken Tag Tournament</i> or <i>Dead Or Alive 2</i> as much as the boys do. But most research done in this area tends to confirm that girls enjoy more in-depth games like role playing and adventure games.	Focus more on writing about the game and how it plays rather than trying to appeal to a very targeted and niche 'lifestyle' of one group of readers.	The whole genre of Bemanl or 'rhythm action' games really stand out. With these games, how well you physically play is as important as how good you are at the game. Games like <i>Dance Dance Revolution</i> , <i>Pop N Music</i> or <i>Beatmania</i> attract as many female as male players. The games are fast, fun, and innovative. See the <i>Criterion</i> feature on page 82 for info on the developer's new PS2 games
 Simon Prytherch Producer at Codemasters	In general I think that statement is true. But, as the games industry has grown into a global force to rival other entertainment industries such as the film industry, developers and publishers are looking to expand their markets. An obvious way to do this is to appeal to women and men, therefore selling to twice the potential number of customers.	Computer games are still seen as a high technology area and typically technology, science and engineering do not appeal to women. I think that this is largely due to Western social conditioning which dictates people's attitudes from an early age. At Codemasters we want more women working here because it would assist us in developing games to appeal to wider audiences.	A better stereotype is that men like power, violence and goal-based games, whereas women prefer emotional, social and character-based games. These principles do not apply to puzzle games, but I think they are a special case. They appeal to both sexes because they are simple to learn and can be picked-up and played for short periods of time.	If you made games which allowed you to properly communicate, build relationships, show expression and develop a character, you would appeal to more women. This, I think, is because women can measure progress by how well they are getting on with the other characters or how many friends or enemies they had in the game.	<i>Tomb Raider</i> – women find Lara a good role model and like being able to kick ass and solve the problems. Men love to follow any sexy woman around and there is a bonus of things to shoot and puzzles to solve! <i>Tekken</i> too – women like this for characterisation and the fact they are equal. They can now beat up the men! Codemasters' <i>LMA Manager 2001</i> for PSone is due for release at the end of February

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ISSUE #06 ON SALE NOW - DON'T MISS IT!





"Get in there!" With voice recognition in *Greatest Striker* and scanned-in faces in a forthcoming *ISS*, the ultimate football game is well on the way.

TECHNO BABBLE

WORDS: PAUL RIGBY/ILLUSTRATION: BEN KIRSCHNER/PHOTOGRAPHY: KATHERINE LANE-SIMS

As every game designer strives to break down the barriers between games and their players, the controller interface is evolving. Could voice recognition technology one day replace the Dual Shock 2? *OPS2* lends an ear...

VOICE RECOGNITION



Since *Star Trek* first graced television screens, the world has been fascinated by the fantasy of voice recognition technology. Any accent, any environment – just speak to the computer and it will understand your intentions perfectly. Yet despite almost every sci-fi series installing this function as standard, the real world has a little catching up to do.

For narrowly-defined tasks in the business world, voice recognition is beginning to gain credibility, but there's a way to go before gamers can expect their PlayStation 2s to respond to the sound of their first command and do it instantly. The messy results produced by the current crop of voice-activated word processors for the Mac and PC prove that creating a computer program that will recognise lengthy commands, is out of reach right now. However, simpler programs of the type required by the comparably small command base of most PS2 games are happening right now.

VOICE OF THE FUTURE

Sony Computer Entertainment's Director Of Technology, Paul Holman, notes that the conditions for the voice recognition success have become much more favourable in recent times. "Voice recognition technology has improved amazingly in the last five years and although still not perfect, say for word processing, there is the opportunity to add considerable value to games."

Over the past 12 months, specialist voice recognition companies, IBM and Sony, have made specific breakthroughs in the software itself, with associated improvements in computer technology. Holman explains, "The key enhancements are improving the actual recognition and handling background noise. At the same time, programs have benefited from processor speed improvements to increase the response time of recognition." He emphasises that voice recognition is the most important – and perhaps the ultimate – future method of game control which doesn't involve the traditional Joypad: "For us, voice recognition is another interesting way in which the possibilities of PS2 can be extended. Voice activation is clearly the best way to achieve a 'no wires' state of interaction with games. Luckily PS2 has the processing power of the Emotion Engine to make real-time recognition feasible."

US-based company Lernout & Hauspie (L&H) is one of the world's leading providers of speech and language technology products. L&H is currently producing an Application Specific Development Kit (ADSK) for PS2 developers – essentially middleware providing a straightforward method of integrating speech recognition into games. The kit should be available to PS2 game developers in May or June and offers what L&H call a "noise robust medium size vocabulary engine" able to cope with background noise and a wide range of commands and accents. L&H have previously achieved success with packages such as *Dragon NaturallySpeaking* (a speech recognition package for laptops), *Voice Xpress* (enabling the user to dictate into virtually any Windows-based program) and *XpressStart* (which allows you to roam the Web entirely via voice control). L&H was also involved

with the voice recognition technology behind *Seaman* [see *Grab The Mic*]. The prospect of this technology on the PS2 is an exciting one.

The possibilities for voice recognition within PS2 games are limitless. The most popular game uses for this technology on the PC are detailed sims, that would come into their own on the PS2. In flight sims for example, you could pay more attention to the action on-screen by monitoring your wingman's progress as well as

the enemy fighters. Of course, one problem of any simulation is the lack of buttons, pedals, levers and the like. While PCs require a clumsy combination of keyboard and voice commands, voice recognition would mean super-realistic stealth fighters, grand prix racers or even tank sims on PS2.

KEEPING IT REAL

For response time, action games most readily expose the current limitations of voice recognition technology. This is proved by *Greatest Striker* and yet the game actually recognises the list of commands so well, that progress in the field will be hotly anticipated. Even when shouting commands in a dubious Japli-ish voice, *Greatest Striker* does carry out your intention, even if it's not an instantaneous response. Now imagine using football's full English phraseology to control not just your player, but to work in tandem with computer-player AI. You could exhort wingers to overlap down the line, call for a cross "on-me-head son" or have the ref react with a yellow card after you've dished out some verbal. Anyone who remember Namco's first-person footie sim *LiberoGrande* can see how good this dream could be.

RPGs and adventure games provide the most obvious forum for the development of mainstream voice recognition. As Dreamcast's bizarrely fascinating *Seaman* virtual pet game shows, the goal of realistic character interaction is in reach. A basic "good morning" from a character might convey a simple greeting or, through gritted teeth, reveal a character's potential aggression. Your voice-activated reply might mean the difference between progress and losing your head to a sharp-edged sword.

Hideo Kojima is a fan of voice recognition technology and has previously made public his wish to utilise it in *Metal Gear Solid 2*. It looks unlikely that voice recognition will now feature in Solid Snake's debut PS2 odyssey, but Kojima's is not an idle dream. He is involved with KCEJ West's esoteric *Tokimeki Memorial* series of 'romantic' RPGs, which has already used what it calls an Emotion Voice System (EVS) for its last PSone outing. The new PS2 Incarnation of *Tokimeki Memorial* will use an enhanced EVS that will allow players to converse on some level with the game characters who also speak the names given them via the microphone peripheral. Next stop, chatting with Mei Ling via a PS2 headset [see box].

The possibilities are as endless as the imaginations of the world's game developers, who will eventually be using voice recognition technology to create brand new gameplay experiences not possible with contemporary interfaces. There is a long way to go before our sci-fi fantasies are realised but industry experts are eventually predicting a day when voice-activated control in games becomes the norm rather than a novelty. Say it loud and say it clear. □

GRAB THE MIC

Existing games using voice recognition technology in diverse and potentially ground-breaking ways.



DREAM AUDITION (PLAYSTATION 2)

Developer: Jaleco

Publisher: Jaleco

Out: Now (Japan only)

It goes without saying that Japanese love their karaoke and it was only a matter of time before some bright spark used Konami's Bemani template to invent a sing-a-long title. *Dream Audition* comes packaged with a small, lightweight version of a crooner's microphone that plugs into the USB port via a control box similar to *Greatest Striker*'s.

Dream Audition then allows you to choose from an array of outrageously cheesy Japanese pop tunes [Rocket Dive's *Hide With Spread Beavers* being a dubious favourite] and you then attempt to hit the correct notes as the music and lyrics scroll across the screen.

It appears that the game does gauge the pitch and rhythm of your voice reasonably accurately – an impressive feat in itself – although being unfamiliar with the selection of songs on offer, it was difficult to test this definitively. The game also didn't recognise words or syllables seeing as moderate success was achieved by substituting the words to *Baby One More Time* for the required Japanese-meets-English babble.





GREATEST STRIKER
(PLAYSTATION 2)
Developer: Taito
Publisher: Taito
Out: Now (Japan only)

Greatest Striker is the first example of voice command technology in a PlayStation 2 game, but Japanese developer Taito's enthusiasm to embrace this new control method suggests it may be the first of many.

The control box plugs into the USB port and a flimsy headset is worn by the player (no headphones involved). A range of around 30 voice commands are recognised by the game, but since this is a Japanese title it requires you to bark orders in Jap-lish: 'shoot!' for shoot, 'pass!' for pass and 'cut!' for tackle. It's actually not difficult to get the game to perform the action required, but there is close to a second delay which is fatal for a fast-action football title – often you're tackled before your player realises you're asking him to shoot. It doesn't help that even without the microphone, Greatest Striker is a sub-ISS, sub-Virtua Striker arcade melée.

It looks as though Greatest Striker will be translated for the UK (UK-based publishers are currently in negotiation with Taito for the title), but although it's clear that the technology works, it needs a more suitable title than this to convince gamers of voice recognition's legitimacy as a controller interface.



SEAMAN
(DREAMCAST)
Developer: Vivarium,
Publisher: Sega
Out: Now (Japan/US only)

Sega created a cute microphone peripheral specifically to use with Seaman – a voice-recognition pet simulator – where you have to grow a manfish in a virtual aquarium and speed his evolution by interacting with him via the mic. It's utterly bizarre but also astonishing and frequently hilarious – Seaman remains the biggest selling Dreamcast game to date in Japan. The voice recognition works surprisingly well in the main, although you do have to repeat yourself regularly and there's an occasional pause as the programming gears search for Seaman's response. But the conversation is surprisingly fluid and the manfish possesses incredible AI and a massive vocabulary.

The second DC microphone game is Dream Dorobo, an online-only title provided by Sega. It's a two-player, co-operative maze game where a Navigator has to shout instructions to guide an Attacker to some hidden treasure while avoiding vicious dogs and policemen.

Dream Dorobo may be a novelty for now, but Seaman proves that voice recognition not only works given the right type of game, but has the potential to introduce whole new genres of computer game design. And the less said about having Leonard Nimoy as his USA voice, the better.



SIDEWINDER GAME VOICE PERIPHERAL
(PC)
Developer: Microsoft
Publisher: Microsoft
Out: Now

Not a game, but a peripheral that works with a number of different PC titles. Unlike the other mic controllers featured here, this is actually a quality piece of equipment which includes a pair of sturdy headphones, but as is always the case, you get what you pay for.

The primary function of the Game Voice is actually to allow players of online games luxuries such as chatting or insulting each other during play, rather than spend time on the keyboard. However, it also boasts a voice recognition feature that works with a number of games where controls can be customised. You can choose your own words and phrases to represent certain commands such as 'fire' or 'change weapon'. The speed of reaction is quick, but still not perfect for rapid-fire shooters. You also have to hold down a button on the control box every time you utter a command, defeating the original object of hands-free play somewhat.

Inevitably, the Game Voice controller works most effectively with slow-moving niche games such as flight simulations, but it proves the technology is ever closer to realisation.

HELLO, THIS IS SNAKE (AND CLAIRE)...

So why the pics of Metal Gear 2 and Res? Because that's exactly where voice recognition is heading. Speaking to this correspondent last May, MGS's Hideo Kojima said that, "I would like to include voice recognition in one of my games. It could suit Metal Gear. Maybe simply calling Codec on the commlink". Add to that Shinji Mikami's comments in this issue's PlayStation 2 interview ("A player might lie, calling for help when they're actually okay..." – see page 38) and the future is bright for those who want to chatter into the night with only an UzI and a zombie for company. Mei Ling? Come in, Mei Ling...





WIPEOUT

Developer: Psygnosis
Publisher: Psygnosis
1 week, Oct 1995
It's fitting that *Wipeout* is the first entry. Its slick presentation, smooth engine and techno soundtrack enabled Sony to market the original PlayStation to a generation of consumers who thought videogames were for Speccy nerds. This is where it all began.



DESTRUCTION DERBY

Developer: Reflections
Publisher: SCE
2 weeks, Oct 1995
Dilapidated by today's standards, but had impact in 1995, when watching side panels and bumpers buckle was a rare novelty. Although the game felt unbalanced, the Destruction Derby Bowl option was tremendous. Reflections moved on to *Driver*, but expect a PS2 return for *DD* via SCE.



TEKKEN

Developer: Namco
Publisher: SCE
4 weeks, Oct-Nov 1995
The arcade entered the living room with the conversion of *Tekken* for PSone. With a host of options, a list of combos for each character, an impressive rendered introduction and beautifully balanced gameplay, *Tekken* was an instant hit and its appeal is still strong on PS2 today.



STRIKER 96

Developer: Rage
Publisher: Time Warner Interactive
1 week, Nov 1995
Football games made a killing long before EA tested the market with its *FIFA* franchise. This effort had awful camera perspectives and uneven gameplay, but this didn't effect its popularity, indicating a hunger for such products. *Wild Wild Racing* is Rage's debut for the PS2.



MORTAL KOMBAT 3

Developer: Williams
Publisher: SCE
1 week, Dec 1995
Tekken had grace, *Mortal Kombat* had guts – literally. It brought finishing moves to the beat-'em-up, and as the series expanded, so did the gruesome confrontations. It may have caused revulsion and adulation, but underneath this coin-op conversion was almost perfect.



FIRST AMONG SEQUELS

WORDS: MARK WALBANK

A number one hit these days is as prestigious in the game charts as it is in the pop charts. *OPS2* looks back at the games for the original PlayStation that made the top spot and sees whether they've made a lasting impression on the PS2 scene or if they were just PSone-hit wonders..



FIFA SOCCER 96

Developer: EA Sports Canada
Publisher: EA
4 weeks, Dec 1995/Jan 1996
No one doubted that EA could take its popular football title from the MegaDrive to PSone and score a hit. The one-touch passing was intuitive, names, teams and stadia were all present and correct. Since then, EA has tweaked the gameplay with each version up to the current PS2 outing.



DOOM

Developer: Id / Midway
Publisher: GT Interactive
4 weeks, Jan-Feb 1996
The graphics may not have matched the PC version, but all the gameplay of the *Doom* games was condensed for this PSone package. The exceptional design, smooth learning curve and frantic action will be fondly remembered by its many fans. The *Doom* legacy lives on in the *Quake* franchise, and *Quake III Arena* should arrive on PS2 in May. Fans of *Doom*'s gameplay, however, should see *TimeSplitters*. Yesterday.



ACTUA SOCCER

Developer: Gremlin
Publisher: Gremlin
3 weeks, Mar 1996
When first released it was by far the best footie sim around, going on to be a popular series. Barry Davies' commentary and the well-modelled stadia added gravitas to gameplay. Sophisticated camera manipulation put this ahead of EA's offering.



ALIEN TRILOGY

Developer: Probe
Publisher: Acclaim
7 weeks, Mar-May 1996
A rare game which is still playable today. Atmospheric HR Giger-inspired locations and classic scanning devices generated tension. Guns aplenty and quality level design made this one of the games of the year. Sadly, Acclaim closed its Probe development house in June 2000.



KRAZY IVAN

Developer: SCE
Publisher: SCE
3 weeks, Jan-Feb 1996
This was a rather lame *Mech Warrior* wannabe. Hollow gameplay consisted of repeatedly blasting at plodding targets, somewhat disguised by novel FMV sequences which spurred the plot on. From Software's *Armoured Core 2* will really highlight *Krazy Ivan*'s shortcomings. [See page 118]



DEFCON 5

Developer: Millennium
Publisher: SCE
1 week, Feb 1996
A curious game – part strategy, part corridor shoot-'em-up – and completely baffling from the outset. Persevere, and it became very rewarding as you defended space bases and solved a mystery. This early game is worth revisiting, but is very unforgiving by today's standards.



RIDGE RACER REVOLUTION

Developer: Namco
Publisher: SCE
2 weeks, May 1996
It was hardly a revolution – Namco added just one new course and two new cars to the original *Ridge*. But it was the best racer before *Gran Turismo* drove everything else into the curb. The series has since becoming an enduring favourite.



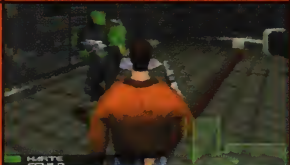
ADIDAS POWER SOCCER

Developer: Psygnosis
Publisher: Psygnosis
4 weeks, May-June 1996
A bold attempt to inject something different into the football game, but was too frustrating. A number of outrageous moves were possible including the super flick, but these could be too powerful. Your goalie flying back into the goal for the fifth time stretched patience to its limits.



INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD

Developer: Konami
Publisher: Konami
3 weeks, June-July 1996
This was a test of skill, endurance and resilience. Everyone knows the format: alternate two buttons to power-up, then a third press for anything from javelin throwing to hurdles. Graphics have improved for the PS2, but fundamentals remain.



FADE TO BLACK

Developer: Delphine
Publisher: EA
2 weeks, July 1996
Adventures in an alien environment brought a much-needed test of mental agility to the early PSone roster, with tricky puzzles. But the game was let down by a poor control interface. Delphine has not followed up the success, concentrating on the *Moto Racer* franchise instead.



RESIDENT EVIL

Developer: Capcom
Publisher: Virgin
4 weeks, Aug 1996
Resident Evil did what many games had previously attempted. It is not difficult to see why the title was so popular. It combined beautifully rendered backdrops, responsive controls and fearsome enemies with that all-important shock value. Watch out for new *Resi* titles on PS2.



FIA FORMULA 1

Developer: Bizarre Creations
Publisher: Psygnosis
4 weeks, Aug-Sept 1996/Oct 1996
The first official *Formula 1* game for the PSone was very special. That the blueprint laid down here has been enhanced ever since is testament to its quality. Bizarre have gone on to produce *Metropolis Street Racer* for Dreamcast, with a revamped *Fur Fighters* heading for PS2 soon.



TEKKEN 2

Developer: Namco
Publisher: SCE
3 weeks, Sept-Oct 1996
Extra characters with their own personalised combos joined Lei and colleagues. Light sourcing added a sense of substance. It looks blocky next to the third version, but at the time Namco had just produced the best beat-'em-up of all time and still the favourite of some *Tekken* purists.

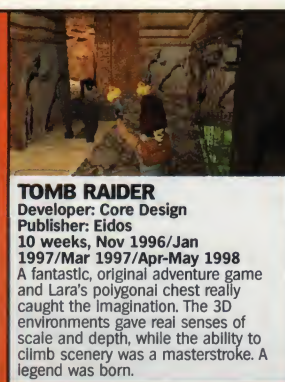


DESTRUCTION DERBY 2
Developer: Reflections
Publisher: Psygnosis
7 weeks, Jan-Feb 1997/Mar 1997
Levels of destruction were increased dramatically with full 3D crashes, different debris types and more realistic car deformations. The opportunity to play back manoeuvres really added to the game. Reflections followed up on this success with its tremendous Driver games.

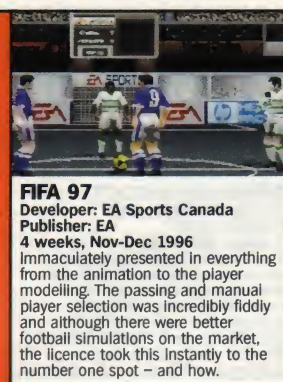
WIPEOUT 2097
Developer: Psygnosis
Publisher: Psygnosis
1 week, Oct 1996
The original may have been tremendous but many complained that the courses were just too tight to negotiate. Psygnosis listened and not only tweaked the gameplay to make racing less frustrating, but also added a seriously addictive two-player link-up mode (now resurfaced as the PS2's i-Link option), a series of brand new power-ups and superb graphical enhancements. Psygnosis has since become SCE Studio Liverpool and is producing WipeOut Fusion for PS2.



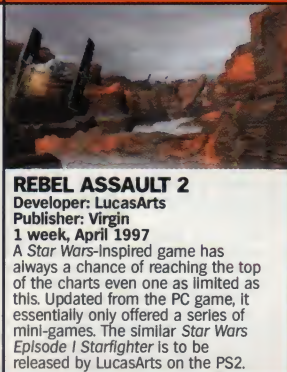
SOVIET STRIKE
Developer: EA
Publisher: EA
2 weeks, Oct 1996
Helicopter missions deep into enemy territory remained as addictive as ever, but there was a feeling that Soviet Strike was a MegaDrive game parading in 32 bit clothing. EA is one of the most prolific PS2 developers, and a comprehensive update of the formula would be most welcome.



TOMB RAIDER
Developer: Core Design
Publisher: Eidos
10 weeks, Nov 1996/Jan 1997/Mar 1997/Apr-May 1998
A fantastic, original adventure game and Lara's polygonal chest really caught the imagination. The 3D environments gave real senses of scale and depth, while the ability to climb scenery was a masterstroke. A legend was born.



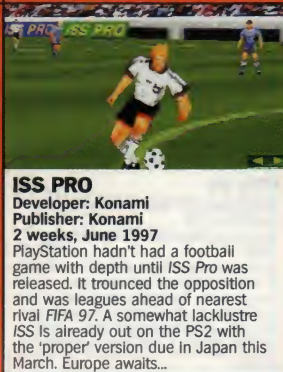
FIFA 97
Developer: EA Sports Canada
Publisher: EA
4 weeks, Nov-Dec 1996
Immaculately presented in everything from the animation to the player modelling. The passing and manual player selection was incredibly fiddly and although there were better football simulations on the market, the licence took this instantly to the number one spot - and how.



REBEL ASSAULT 2
Developer: LucasArts
Publisher: Virgin
1 week, April 1997
A Star Wars-inspired game has always a chance of reaching the top of the charts even one as limited as this. Updated from the PC game, it essentially only offered a series of mini-games. The similar Star Wars Episode I Starfighter is to be released by LucasArts on the PS2.



SOUL BLADE
Developer: Namco
Publisher: SCE
5 weeks, May-June 1997
It was a brilliant, graphically-astute 3D beat-'em-up. Its sequel, Soul Calibur, is still one of the finest games on Sega's system. Rumours of Soul Calibur 2 being produced for the PS2-related System 246 arcade board, can only fuel speculation of a glorious Sony homecoming.



ISS PRO
Developer: Konami
Publisher: Konami
2 weeks, June 1997
PlayStation hadn't had a football game with depth until ISS Pro was released. It trounced the opposition and was leagues ahead of nearest rival FIFA 97. A somewhat lacklustre ISS is already out on the PS2 with the 'proper' version due in Japan this March. Europe awaits...

TOP TEN GAMES NEVER TO REACH NO. 1
The public isn't always right! Here are ten classic PSone games which really deserved to claim the top spot.

1. ISS Pro Evolution
2. Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee
3. Ape Escape
4. Silent Hill
5. Grand Theft Auto
6. Quake II
7. Broken Sword
8. Anna Kournikova's Smash Court Tennis
9. Syphon Filter 2
10. PaRappa The Rapper



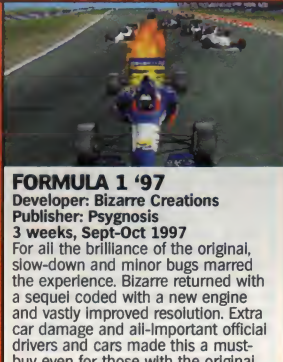
RAGE RACER
Developer: Namco
Publisher: SCE
1 week, June 1997
The rather grey palette disguised a very colourful racing game. It was superior in all departments to the limited Ridge Racer Revolution, and offered impressive options to upgrade your vehicle almost a year before Gran Turismo. Some say it's superior to successor Type 4.



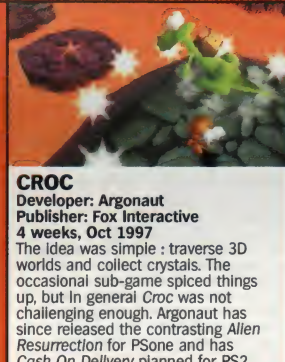
V-RALLY
Developer: Infogrames France
Publisher: Ocean
10 weeks, June-Sept 1997
In 1997 this was the rally game of choice. A glut of courses from muddy fields in England to tight mountain passes in Corsica gave it a real sense of identity. Handling was good too, with the car rolling and bouncing convincingly over undulations in the player's path.



JURASSIC PARK: LOST WORLD
Developer: Dreamworks Interactive
Publisher: EA
2 weeks, Sept 1997
Dreamworks created one of the best and worst games of '97. Visuals were beautiful, yet it had poor level design. Dreamworks are responsible for the Medal Of Honor games and a PS2 upgrade is due. Konami's Jurassic Park III tie-in will hit late this year.



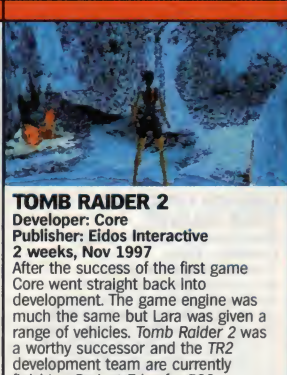
FORMULA 1 '97
Developer: Bizarre Creations
Publisher: Psygnosis
3 weeks, Sept-Oct 1997
For all the brilliance of the original, slow-down and minor bugs marred the experience. Bizarre returned with a sequel coded with a new engine and vastly improved resolution. Extra car damage and all-important official drivers and cars made this a must-buy even for those with the original.



CROC
Developer: Argonaut
Publisher: Fox Interactive
4 weeks, Oct 1997
The idea was simple: traverse 3D worlds and collect crystals. The occasional sub-game spiced things up, but in general CROC was not challenging enough. Argonaut has since released the contrasting Allen Resurrection for PSone and has Cash On Delivery planned for PS2.



FINAL FANTASY VII
Developer: Squaresoft
Publisher: SCE
2 weeks, Nov 1997
60+ hours of gameplay in just one title was almost unheard of before FFVII. Square has continued the series with two sequels on PSone and will bring their franchise to PlayStation 2 with the eagerly anticipated Final Fantasy X and Final Fantasy XI.



TOMB RAIDER 2
Developer: Core
Publisher: Eidos Interactive
2 weeks, Nov 1997
After the success of the first game Core went straight back into development. The game engine was much the same but Lara was given a range of vehicles. Tomb Raider 2 was a worthy successor and the TR2 development team are currently finishing Project Eden for PS2.



FIFA: ROAD TO THE WORLD CUP 98
Developer: EA Sports Canada
Publisher: EA Sports
8 weeks, Dec 1997/Jan 1998
EA's next FIFA game was typical style over substance. It played well, looked good and had all 192 national teams vying for a place in the World Cup tournament, but that vital spark and depth which Konami had conjured up with ISS Pro just wasn't there.



COOL BOARDERS 2
Developer: UEP Systems
Publisher: SCE
2 weeks, Feb 1998
The only snowboarding franchise of note returned to the PlayStation and it was improved if not totally overhauled. A two-player split-screen was added and the gameplay was better with a much needed update of a tricks list, but poor collision detection was still an issue.

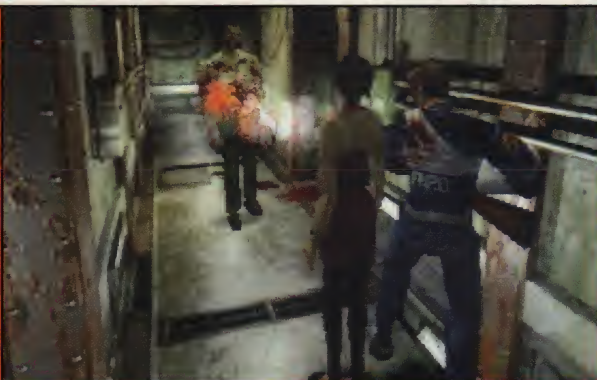


DIE HARD TRILOGY
Developer: Probe Entertainment
Publisher: Fox Interactive
2 weeks, Mar 1998
A rare movie-licensed game which delivered great gameplay. But the real innovation was providing gamers with three completely separate games each with their own distinct qualities. The driving, adventure and lightfun segments all contributed to a great package.

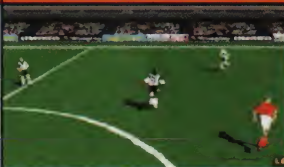




CRASH BANDICOOT
Developer: Naughty Dog
Publisher: SCE
1 weeks, Mar 1998
Sony's rival to *Sonic The Hedgehog* had spark but less bite. Levels were linear although the sub-games helped things along. The series managed two more outings plus spin-offs. Konami's PS2 *Crash* is due this year while Naughty Dog are working on a PS2 release for SCE.



RESIDENT EVIL 2
Developer: Capcom
Publisher: Virgin
1 week, Apr 1998
Two years after the original Capcom returned with an exceptional update. This time loading times were decreased, ammo was more plentiful and two characters with differing routes through the game could be controlled. All the shocks of the original returned but an emphasis was also placed on using powerful weapons to destroy the ferals creatures that had overtaken Raccoon City. Simply fantastic. *Code: Veronica* and *Devil May Cry* can't come soon enough.



PREMIER MANAGER 98
Developer: Gremlin
Publisher: Gremlin
1 week, June 1998
From PC to PlayStation this was a valiant effort to cram all the information and all the statistics which made the formula such a success. Gremlin went on to become Infogrames Sheffield, but no *Premier Manager* game for PS2 has yet been confirmed.



COLIN MCRAE RALLY
Developer: Codemasters
Publisher: Codemasters
8 weeks, July-Aug 1998
Immensely demanding, the first *Colin McRae Rally* was a delight to play. Courses included New Zealand, Greece, Monaco and Australia with great handling and the ability to pull off impressive power slides. Expect an announcement on *Colin McRae Rally* for the PS2 imminently.



GRAN TURISMO
Developer: Polyphony Digital
Publisher: SCE
7 weeks, May-June 1998
The most astounding racing game ever. The ability to fine-tune your vehicle's performance, from brake disks to vehicle turbo, was the title's real strength, but the racing aspect was amazing. Wait for a much-enhanced update for PS2 - *Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec* is coming soon.



WORLD CUP 98
Developer: EA Sports Canada
Publisher: EA Sports
2 weeks, June 1998
Des and Motty provided the voice-overs for what was easily the best football game from EA. The practice which had gone into previous efforts came to the fore with this title which offered smooth passing plays, convincing AI and a challenge to savour. ISS now had a rival.



SPYRO THE DRAGON
Developer: Insomniac Games
Publisher: SCE
3 weeks, Oct-Nov 1998
Though the looks suggested this was for kiddies, *Spyro* offered depth and variety. Solid 3D environments, used well, gave a real sense of freedom - gliding on updrafts of air was a rare pleasure. Expect *Spyro* for PS2 from Havas with the talented Insomniac PS2-dreaming away for SCE.



TOMB RAIDER 3
Developer: Core Design
Publisher: Eidos Interactive
1 week, Nov 1998
Another Christmas, another *Tomb Raider*. This time an improved engine and level selection option made for a much less linear game experience. The find-the-key-to-open-the-door mechanic was too prevalent and though polished, the *Tomb Raider* concept was a little tired.



FIFA 99
Developer: EA Sports Canada
Publisher: EA
8 weeks, Nov-Dec 1998/January 1999
Just eight months after the last one? In fairness EA had tweaked its arcade-style football game to rival Konami's simulation approach in *ISS Pro* but worth spending another £40 on? Probably not. The height of FIFA overkill.



PREMIER MANAGER 99
Developer: Gremlin
Publisher: Gremlin
4 weeks, Jan-Feb 1999
The 'if-it-works-don't-fix-it' mentality was apparent in this 'update'. A few tweaks were made, but things remained much the same as the too-recent predecessor. *LMA Manager* would soon arrive and highlight the *Premier Manager* series' shortfalls.



A BUG'S LIFE
Developer: Disney Interactive
Publisher: SCE
1 week, Feb 1999
Leisurely camera work and a lack of originality made this a no-go for discerning gamers. Popularity of the film gave the title a brief spell at number one. CGI cut-scenes were worked in well, and small children who had not yet formed a sense of taste may have briefly enjoyed it.



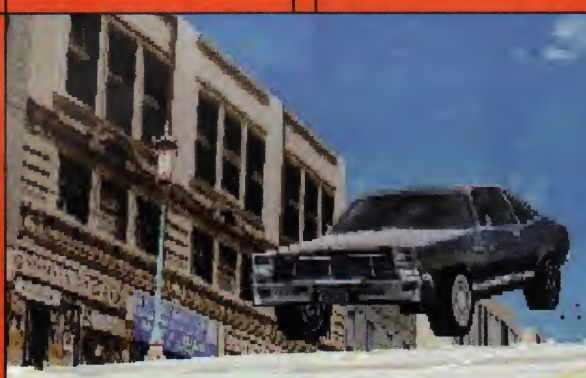
METAL GEAR SOLID
Developer: KCEJ West
Publisher: Konami
11 weeks, Feb-March/May 1999
Hideo Kojima converted *Solid Snake*'s NES and SNES adventures onto the PSone and completed the task with some aplomb. Brilliant gadgetry and varied bosses made for a superb espionage romp. No wonder *MGS2* is the most anticipated game in history.



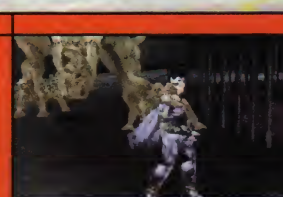
RIDGE RACER TYPE 4
Developer: Namco
Publisher: Namco
5 weeks, Apr-May 1999
The fourth instalment of the popular driving game had stunning looks and supercharged speed. It was a real arcade antidote to the demanding *Gran Turismo*, but some found it all too easy, a criticism that persists with the latest version, PS2's *Ridge Racer V*.



BRIAN LARA CRICKET
Developer: Codemasters
Publisher: Codemasters
1 week, June 1999
A cricket simulation was unusual for Codemasters but they did an exceptional job. Great controls made for fabulous gameplay. Once bowling and batting disciplines were mastered, taking wickets or reaching a century were enormously gratifying. A PS2 update would be nice.



DRIVER
Developer: Reflections
Publisher: GT Interactive
8 weeks, June-July 1999
It wasn't the first driving game to attempt a whole city structure but Reflections pulled it off more convincingly than ever before. The car physics were basic but it suited the frantic cops 'n' robbers car chase sequences perfectly. A Director mode allowed players to record and edit their most spectacular escapes from the police. Reflections is currently working on *Stuntman* for the PS2 - a game that promises to give the player the opportunity to pull off death-defying stunts in Hollywood. And *Driver*? Well, what do you think?



LEGACY OF KAIN: SOUL REAVER
Developer: Crystal Dynamics
Publisher: Eidos
3 weeks, Aug-Sept 1999
Wonderfully gothic visuals, mind-bending puzzles and an amazing spectral morphing technique made for one of the most interesting titles of the year. Crystal Dynamics is putting the final touches to the PS2 sequel, to be released this April.

TOP TEN TOP SPOT HOGGERS
The games which hung on at Number One for the longest.
1= Metal Gear Solid (11 wks)
2= Tomb Raider (10 wks)
2= V-Rally
2= FIFA 2000
5= FIFA Road To The World Cup 98 (8 wks)
5= FIFA 99
5= Driver
5= WWF Smackdown
9= Alien Trilogy (7 wks)
9= Destruction Derby 2
9= Gran Turismo



FA PREMIER LEAGUE STARS
Developer: EA (UK)
Publisher: EA Sports
1 week, Aug 1999
The addition of a management aspect got the developers into a bit of a mess. Neither football action nor the simplistic management facet worked at all well. It didn't stop EA making a fortune on the back of previous FIFA successes, though.



WWF ATTITUDE
Developer: Acclaim
Publisher: Acclaim
2 weeks, Aug 1999
This was one of the first and best wrestling sims and clearly a labour of love for the Acclaim team, with good representations of all the main WWF figures and fluid gameplay to match. The wrestling game zeitgeist has since passed to THQ with its *Smackdown* series.

FIRST AMONG SEQUELS



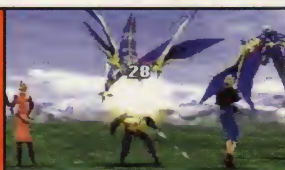
STAR WARS EPISODE I: THE PHANTOM MENACE

Developer: LucasArts
Publisher: Activision
3 weeks, Sept-Oct 1999
Controlling young Obi-Wan and colleagues, required the Force itself. Everything was awkward and clumsy showing signs of a rushed development. LucasArts has sworn to spend more resources on its *Episode II*-related games for PS2.



LMA MANAGER

Developer: Codemasters
Publisher: Codemasters
1 week, Oct 1999
At last a comprehensive and versatile football management simulation came to PSone. A special quick game option such as winning the FA Cup in a set number of years made replay a lot of fun. An update of this fine game is due for PS2, with online capabilities mooted.



FINAL FANTASY VIII

Developer: Squaresoft
Publisher: SCEE
1 week, October 1999
The manga style was replaced with a more American aesthetic to appeal to western tastes, but the *Final Fantasy* formula complete with random encounters and lengthy cut-scenes returned. A novel card-collecting game and a well-told story added extra appeal.



FIFA 2000

Developer: EA Sports Canada
Publisher: EA
10 weeks, Oct-Nov 1999/Dec 1999/Jan 2000
They took a whip, an official licence and then went into a small room to flog it to death. This was strictly football by numbers – not at all bad but had no passion. Anyone owning *FIFA 99* may as well have tipped their £40 down a drain.



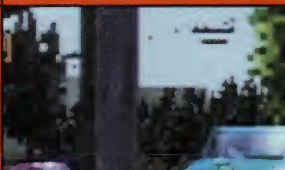
TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION

Developer: Core Design
Publisher: Eidos
2 weeks, Nov-Dec 1999
At number one again, just a year after her last outing but in Core's defence, an emphasis on quality level design made this a superior effort than 2 and 3. A fifth Lara game was to emerge, before a move to next-gen technology.



TOMORROW NEVER DIES

Developer: Black Ops
Publisher: EA
2 weeks, Dec 1999/Jan 2000
In all honesty there was little to recommend this cash-in title. Collision detection was atrocious, camera erratic and AI the equivalent of a village idiot. Recent PSone sequel, *The World Is Not Enough*, was much better, and much is expected from the PS2 version.



GRAN TURISMO 2

Developer: Polyphony Digital
Publisher: SCEE
6 weeks, Jan 2000/Feb 2000
Not just a cash-in on the success of the original. Many more tracks and cars were added and the structure altered, so that players could not just buy the best car and instantly beat all the tracks. Only vehicles of certain types could enter the key races. A new Rally mode was particularly good with cars powersliding through the mud at magnificent speeds. Look out for *Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec*, and see the preview on page 24.



COLIN MCRACE RALLY 2.0

Developer: Codemasters
Publisher: Codemasters
6 weeks, June-July 2000
Codemasters returned with an overhaul of the best rally game on any format. Exceptional visuals, crisp handling and car damage which subtly affected various handling characteristics made for a truly sublime driving experience. So demanding but so worth it.



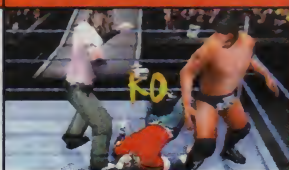
RESIDENT EVIL 3: NEMESIS

Developer: Capcom
Publisher: Eidos
3 weeks, Feb 2000
A great addition to the PSone library for fans but it offered little new. The addition of the *Nemesis* was great but completing puzzles became tiresome. Well-designed and executed but Code: *Veronica* and *Devil May Cry* promise more.



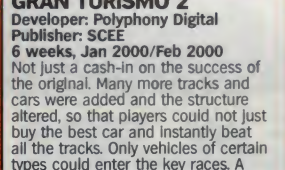
F1 2000

Developer: EA Sports
Publisher: EA Sports
2 weeks, Mar-Apr 2000
A competent and well-polished title from EA. Lovely touches showed that care had been lavished on this game, but it did nothing new in the gameplay department. More Johnny Herbert than Jensen Button: reliable rather than fresh. A new PS2 F1 game from EA is on the shelves now.



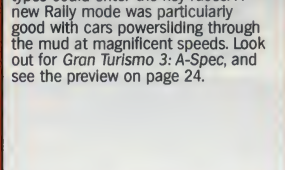
WWF: SMACKDOWN

Developer: Jukes
Publisher: THQ
8 weeks, Apr-May 2000
The first wrestling game that provided lumbering men with fluid controls and instant command responses. Create-a-superstar mode allowed players to invest interest into their creations. With massive sales, THQ will duly provide another *Smackdown* for the PS2.



SPIDER-MAN

Developer: Neversoft
Publisher: Activision
2 weeks, Sept 2000
Neversoft re-used *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* engine to bring this superhero to life. Flitting from wall to wall was a hoot and the challenge was pitched just right. Neversoft will continue with both their *Tony Hawk's* and *Spider-Man* franchises on next generation hardware.



TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2

Developer: Neversoft
Publisher: Activision
1 week, Sept 2000
The massive array of tricks, smooth controls and cash incentives were all retained from the excellent original version and a brilliant skate park editor provided even more longevity. A third instalment on PS2 has been blissfully confirmed.



X-MEN: MUTANT ACADEMY

Developer: Paradox Entertainment
Publisher: Activision
1 week, Aug 2000
A simple control mechanism gave a great deal of immediacy but this was rushed out to cash in on the film (this being a comic licence). All the X-Men faves were there, but it wasn't half as good as *Marvel Vs Capcom*. PS2 X-Men games are on the way.



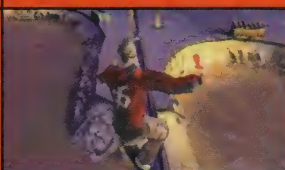
WORLD TOURING CARS

Developer: Codemasters
Publisher: Codemasters
3 weeks, Aug-Sept 2000
As well as a graphics overhaul, AI had improved to the point where drivers remember your aggressive moves and plot revenge. A well-structured championship and a multitude of courses made for a long-lasting and engrossing drive. Petition Codes for a PS2 version.



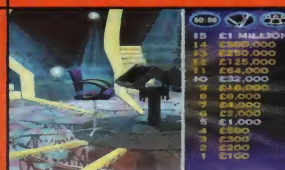
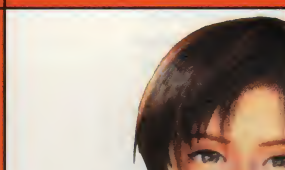
DRIVER 2

Developer: Reflections
Publisher: Infogrames
2 weeks, Nov 2000
This time Reflections outdid itself by adding Tanner's ability to exit cars and appropriate a host of other vehicles. Mission variety improved and dodging police was as exciting as ever. Some slow-down and pop-up marred what was otherwise a triple A title. Roll on *Stuntman*.



WWF SMACKDOWN 2

Developer: Jukes
Publisher: THQ
2 weeks, Nov-Dec 2000
The fact that each of the 50 characters could be recognised from their moves alone signifies the achievement. Great in two-player but the Career mode made this essential for all WWF fans. *Smackdown 3* for PS2 is a definite go, with the option to scan in your own face!



WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE

Developer: Hothouse
Publisher: Eidos Interactive
5 weeks, Sept-Oct 2000
It may have been a cynical cash-in on the ITV quiz show (includes a Chris Tarrant voiceover) but it did provide a lot of laughs if played with friends. There was little point in not trying to answer the £1 million question. What did you have to lose?



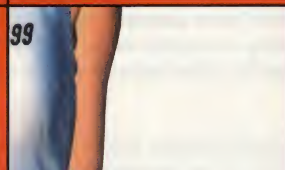
FIFA 2001

Developer: EA Sports Canada
Publisher: EA
1 week, Nov 2000
You may already have bought the PlayStation 2 version, but the downsized PSone edition predictably added little to the usual *FIFA* formula – the same in all but name. This didn't stop it from selling by the shedload though.



DRIVER 2

Developer: Reflections
Publisher: Infogrames
2 weeks, Nov 2000
This time Reflections outdid itself by adding Tanner's ability to exit cars and appropriate a host of other vehicles. Mission variety improved and dodging police was as exciting as ever. Some slow-down and pop-up marred what was otherwise a triple A title. Roll on *Stuntman*.



TOP TEN PSONE FRANCHISES

The game series which kept coming back to number one.

1. FIFA (37 wks)
- 2= Tomb Raider (14 wks)
- 2= Colin McRae Rally (14 wks)
4. Gran Turismo (13 wks)
5. Tekken (12 wks)
- 6= Driver (10 wks)
- 6= WWF Smackdown (10 wks)
8. Destruction Derby (9 wks)
- 9= Ridge Racer (8 wks)
- 10= Resident Evil (8 wks)

WORDS: MATT BIELBY

THE CROFT MACHINE

In issue #02, we brought you the latest news on the *Tomb Raider* movie. This time *OPS2* reports live from the Pinewood set of 2001's biggest film.



We're inside a vast, Mayan-style temple, roughly the size of a decent town square. All around, man-sized statues of ape creatures glower menacingly. To the left other far stranger stone animals crouch, ready to spring into life. The ceiling, somewhere above, is shrouded in darkness and vines hang down, a reminder of the jungle outside. Right in front of us, in the centre of this crumbling yet still magnificent edifice, there's a large pit with a stone island in the middle. That's where the action is taking place.

We shush, on order, as dry ice billows from a machine hidden in one of the dark corners. And above the stone island is a 30 foot log that hangs suspended from chains. It slowly, then with increasing speed, begins to swing. The log careers giddily as it gains speed, swooping back and forth like an inverter or Pirate Ship you'd find at a fairground. At this stage we start to get a little concerned for the safety of the slight (yet clearly buff) girl balancing on the thing – or you would, if it wasn't so obvious who she is. Long dark hair tied back in a ponytail, tight black pants, army boots, sleeveless T-shirt and a 'been there, done that' expression. This is someone who can handle herself, alright. It is Lara Croft. Or rather Angelina Jolie doing a very fine impression of the videogame heroine and cyber role model.

SETTING THE SCENE

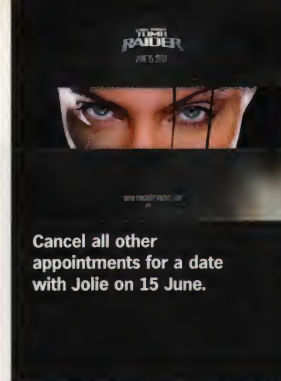
We're not, of course, anywhere near a jungle, but instead on one of the incredibly detailed sets at Pinewood Studios, Britain's premiere movie studio complex. Pinewood, as anyone who's visited will tell you, is a fairly grotty place – a shambolic maze of sheds, warehouses and factory buildings hidden behind a relatively nice country house. You've seen this house before – it's appeared in numerous films, not least *From Russia With Love*, where it played the part of a Moscow mansion in the opening sequence.

But it's not what Pinewood looks like that matters, it's the magic that's created there which counts. And this particular Cambodian temple – the 'Temple of Ten Thousand Shadows' apparently, in which we find the 'Chamber of Dancing Light' – is amongst the most magical set it's ever seen. Good sets are no guarantee of a good film though (*Judge Dredd's* sprawling Mega City One street set is a reminder of that) but it's a start. The minute you see it, it's obvious that serious money is being spent on this production. Paramount has been estimated to putting \$80 million into the film's coffers. On-screen it should look incredible as on close inspection the tiniest detail has been precisely sculpted, and the brief snippet of this 'Lara on a log' sequence in the movie trailer attests this.

Actually the trailer – accessible at the official Web site, www.tombraidermovie.com – is a stunner. That tight green spandex top, filled out convincingly by Rhona Mitra and Neil McAndrew in assorted Core/Eldos press photos may be gone, but Jolie is unmistakable as everyone's favourite unconventional English adventurer. Plenty of the movie snippets in the trailer are positively iconic, including an incredible leaping motorcycle/machine-pistol shot straight out of the games [See box for a more detailed analysis of the trailer].

CROFT TOURS

As we go on a guided tour around the other sets, they are instantly recognisable from the trailer. Our first port of call is the interior of Croft Manor where Lara fights off the SAS-lookalikes while hanging from bungee cords. The exterior shots were filmed on location at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire. It's all still pretty much intact, bar the broken glass on the floor and bullet holes that act as an indication of a previous gunfight. On one side of the



THE TRAILER

If you can't wait until 15 June, the trailer shows *Tomb Raider* to be an exciting, breakneck ride with Angelina Jolie as a knock-out Lara, just oozing sauciness...

□ The trailer opens with various moody, smoke-filled shots of the very tomb set we saw Angelina straddling her log in. There are various chains hanging down from the ceiling, and a large golden statue of a cross-legged Buddha-type figure sitting centrally. There are some vaguely glowing green egg-shaped objects in its lap.

□ But what's this? There appears to be the slim silhouette of a human figure, hanging upside down amongst the dangling chains and creepers. Something a couple of feet long hangs from the back of its head.

□ For a moment, nothing happens. Then suddenly the figure moves. Two small hands bring up two large automatics, and cock them simultaneously. The figure then drops 30 feet, somersaulting four times before landing lightly on the chamber floor. Large black boots, short black shorts, black T-shirt, long ponytail and fetishistic leather holsters strapped around her upper thighs. It's Lara.

□ We get the first close up of her face, as she looks around. It's filled with an almost sexual excitement.

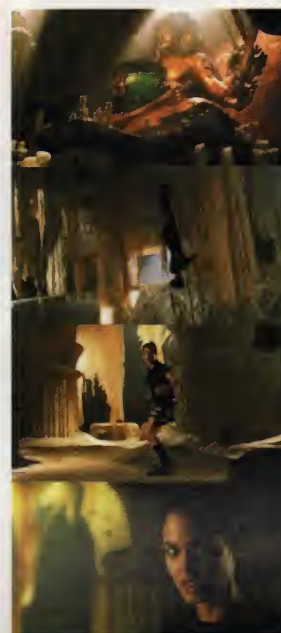
□ Suddenly things get weird. Lara's face is still there, but now it's in a small window in the bottom corner of a larger computer screen. There are various control icons, a large central blueprint-type image of some sort of robot, and an ominous message on screen: "Reading mission files. Terminate: Lara Croft."

□ And now there's action! Still in this tomb, we think, a large robot – some distant relation of ED-209 from *RoboCop* – swings a huge metal fist at Lara, who ducks backwards. Sprawled on the ground, it smashes the flagstone between Lara's legs, inches from her flesh.

□ Rolling back, she flick-flacks out of harm's way, drawing her guns during a final mid-air somersault and giving the 'bot both cartridges. From a robot's-eye view we're almost upon her, when Lara puts her hand up, and speaks for the first time, in a perfectly serviceable English accent: 'Stop!' Ah, it's a holo training sequence...

□ Then it gets weird again. Back at the robot control screen, the "Terminate" message is wiped, to be replaced by "Lara's Party Mix: Play." And the music changes – from the orchestral score we had before, to dance music.

□ A voiceover commences, as we get various quick-edited scenes from Lara's life. Lara walking through the candle-lit hallway of a large country house, followed by a servant. Lara looking moodily through some large curtains, as a strong wind blows her long hair backwards. Lara using a





"Angelina was my only choice [for Lara]," confesses director Simon West. "Without her I probably wouldn't have done the film."

Tomb – it may concern:
Angelina as Lara gets back to
her raiding roots.

THE PLAYERS

A rough guide to the predominantly British cast who star as Lara's friends and foes in the *Tomb Raider* movie.



SIMON WEST

Director Previously responsible for thrusting Nic Cage action filck *Con Air* and Travolta vehicle *The General's Daughter*.



ANGELINA JOLIE

Lara Croft Her pouting features and screen-stealing roles in *Girl, Interrupted* and *Gone In 60 Seconds* need no introduction.



IAIN GLEN

Powell This Scottish veteran of stage and screen (*Gorillas In The Mist*, *Silent Scream*) plays the film's arch villain.



DANIEL CRAIG

Alex Lara's occasional tomb-raiding accomplice is played by this young star of *Elizabeth* and *Hotel Splendide*.



NOAH TAYLOR

Bryce Currently starring in *Almost Famous*, Taylor plays the film's geeky tech wizard, the Q to Lara's Bond.



CHRIS BARRIE

Hillary The *Red Dwarf* and *Brilliant Empire* actor makes his movie debut as Lara's butler. And no, he's not a hologram.



JULIAN RHIND-TUTT

Pimms Perhaps best known for being the best thing in offbeat sitcom *Hippies*, Rhind-Tutt plays Powell's daftly-named assistant.



LESLIE PHILLIPS

Wilson The eccentric British screen veteran (*The Jackal*, *Out Of Africa*) appears as a former ally of Lord Croft now siding with Powell.



JON VOIGHT

Lord Croft Angelina's dad in real life is also Lara's on-screen father. Best known for *Midnight Cowboy* among many, many others.

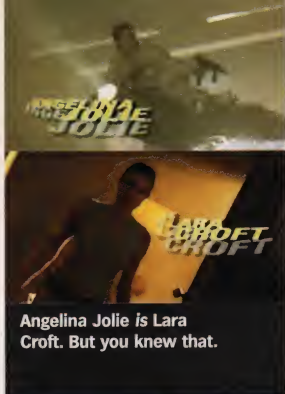


RAIDING THE WEB

Keep up with the latest Lara movie developments online.

All these Images, from enticling Angelina close-ups to exclusive glimpses of the lush film sets, can be found at the *Tomb Raider* movie official site (www.tombraidermovie.com). A new visual is posted each week – these can also include maps and storyboard sketches. Also check here for plot details, event updates and other tantalising tidbits if you just can't hold on until June.





→ magnifying glass to check out an image of a large, scary-looking eye design, presumably to be found in a tomb somewhere.

□ We then cut to a scene with Lara in black leather trousers and Bono-like wraparound shades bursts into a crusty English auction house, walks to the front and sits down cockily with her feet resting on the chair in front of her, much to the consternation of the nearest *Antiques Roadshow* refugee.

□ Lara is then seen working at a large desk, asking someone off-camera if they've "ever heard of the Clock of Ages?" The reply is that it "gives its possessor the power of the People of the Light."

□ The voiceover, meanwhile, fills in the basics for non-gaming fans. Lara is "born into wealth, groomed by the elite, and trained for combat" while her father tells her that, "the future is yours now." Meanwhile, "the all-seeing eye" is ominously mentioned by someone, somewhere.

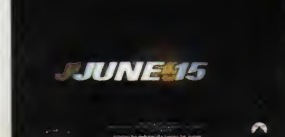
□ More quick-cut scenes: Lara and various gun-toting types search another tomb, and seem to be blinded in a *Raiders of the Lost Ark*-style lightshow; we're introduced to our main villain, Manfred Powell (Iain Glenn), a well-groomed, chisel-jawed, cold-faced type who tells Lara in a large, empty church, "We can be partners." Her reply – "But you might try to kill me" – is met by a fake-hurt "I'm not going to kill you," and then Lara turns to the camera and gives the audience her most winning smile: "I said you'd try."

□ We get spectacular shots of one of Lara's training programmes, in half-buttoned white judo-type PJs she bounces on bungee ropes around the interior of Croft Manor's main hall, only to be interrupted by the arrival of a black-clad, SAS-style hit squad, who spray the place with bullets. Lara bounces to the ground, grabs what appears to be a knife, and leaps to the offensive. On her own turf, the hit squad are ripped to pieces.

□ More quick shots: Lara looks through a large telescope at the stars; walks purposefully towards the camera dressed in pale grey and surrounded by black-clad soldiers, as two twin-rotor Chinook helicopters take off in the background; rides a motorbike through a dark building and a hail of gunfire, jumping it over everything and firing behind her with a machine-pistol as she does so.

□ And, in perhaps the most game-like image of all, leaps from wall to rocky outcrop to falling obelisk inside some dusty tomb. In a breathtaking moment of platform-game come to life. Similar images follow, of Lara swinging on ropes before the final snippet of dialogue.

□ Lara's geeky tech-support cohort, Bryce, asks her, "Time to save the universe?" to which she smirks and answers poshly in the only way she can: "Absolutely."



→ mansion's main hallway is a glass wall through which you can see a high tech computer room, apparently this is Lara's global base of operations. Slumped on the floor of this room is the carcass of a large robot, which she apparently fought here. As far as we can tell, it's the one from the early tomb scenes in the trailer, making it seem likely that the fight was some sort of virtual training exercise. "We based the look of the fantastic machinery we use in the film on sexy machines from the real world," Production Designer Kirk Petrucci later reveals. "There's a lot of Ducati monster bikes in that robot."

Just when we thought we couldn't be more impressed, there's better to come just around the corner, where a much larger set is being completed. It is, in best videogame tradition, a 'slippy-slidey ice world' that's apparently somewhere in the wastes of Siberia, though the linked location shoot actually took place in Iceland. We're inside a large ice cave of some sort, where an ancient device has been excavated. It's a gigantic, stylised brass and iron representation of the solar system, meant to have been built by some ancient race, though it's got something of a Jules Verne/HG Wells look to it. Align the gigantic metal balls that represent the planets in a certain way, and it's goodnight Vienna. It's a sequence that doesn't appear anywhere in the trailer (though the part with the Chinooks may be part of Lara's arrival at that location) but from the excitement the crew express over it, it's going to be amazing. The race that leads up to this sequence, in which Lara slides along the top of a glacier pulled by a team of huskies and pursued by snowmobiles sounds worth the price of admission in itself.

Minor locations seem to have been well-realised too, many famous British buildings appear: Battersea Power Station, Greenwich's Royal Naval College and of all places, the old hotel above St Pancras Station in London.

These sets and locations are over-the-top, but they're rarely outside the realms of possibility. "I wanted the London you see in this film to look like the real London, not some picture postcard American movie version," says Petrucci. "It's the real world, but with a twist. Despite all the fantastic elements in the film, we've gone to great pains to keep it believable – and, indeed, British. That's why all the vehicles Lara uses are British, for instance. She's got the Aston Martin and Land Rovers and the bike had to be a Norton."

Director Simon West also believes that trying to keep the physics as believable as possible is essential to creating a world that a general – rather than a videogame-literate – audience will accept. "I've set certain rules up in the film that when you're above ground everything has to be pretty much plausible," he says. "We push it every now and again, as there are weird phenomena in the world. But when we go underground, into the tombs, we change the rules completely. The gloves are off, and almost anything can happen. There's a very surreal element to *Tomb Raider*."

Although the finer details of the plot have not been released, it will be an all-action chase around in globe in the classic 007/*Indiana Jones* tradition. We don't want to spoil anything, but as in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, the ultimate threat is supernatural in a broad sense – we suspect that 'be careful what you wish for, you might get it' may well turn out to be the moral of the film.

BACKGROUND CHANGES

No only has a great deal of work gone into creating realistic sets, but the star of the film also put in the hours to perfect her role. "Angelina herself had a lot to do with the look of the Lara character," Petrucci explains, as we crouch behind West and his monitors, overseeing Angelina swing on her log for the twentieth time this afternoon. "We took inspiration from the games of course, but we redesigned the belts, guns and backpack quite radically. It's all modular now, so the backpack and holsters clip onto her belts or, if she fancies, onto other things like her motorbike. Instead. It's an element I believe they're going to introduce in the next game. In fact, I think a lot of the modifications we've made to the look of Lara, and which Angelina contributed to in a big way, will make it to the games."

And indeed, as Angelina patiently waits on her log for yet another take, everyone goes out of their way to tell OPS2 what a star she is, and how impressed they are with her acting her attitude and the way she works the camera. "Angelina was always my only choice, not even my first choice," says West. "It was really a one-horse race. If she didn't do it, I couldn't think who else would have been suitable. I probably wouldn't have done the film." □

//On-screen it should look incredible as the tiniest detail has been precisely sculpted//



Shiny Red Car by name, shiny red car by nature... Criterion's road racer gets ready to take on *Ridge* and chums.

WORDS: SAM RICHARDS/PHOTOGRAPHY: JAMES CUMPSTY

ROUGE RACER

From its roots as a gaming technology company, Guildford's Criterion Studios has emerged as an ambitious PlayStation 2 game developer. The first third-party designers in Europe to receive PS2 dev kits, its skills are being put to use on two impressive new games, one of which is *Shiny Red Car* or *SRC*, a manic arcade road racer.



If there's any doubt that the launch of PlayStation 2 has fired the imagination and ambition of British developers, just take a look at Criterion Studios. Started seven years ago as a research subsidiary for Japanese electronics giant Canon, Criterion began life producing technical demos for the PC. Its work expanded into the sphere of middleware – programs which enable console game developers to get a head start in a particular area of game production. A relationship with Sony was established and now Criterion's RenderWare graphics middleware program for PlayStation 2 is used by 200 developers worldwide (current exponents include *Rayman Revolution* and *Aqua Aqua*).

This behind-the-scenes success was fine up to a point, Criterion decided, but the company wanted a piece of the real action. Therefore, a dedicated games division was established and now comprises half of the company – around 40 staff. Its first game was *TrickStyle*, an underrated hoverboard racer that impressed at Dreamcast's launch.

Adamant to be associated with the newest technology, Criterion switched its allegiance to PlayStation 2 after being the first third-party game creators in the UK to receive PS2 dev kits (the prized machines remain bolted to the floor in the Criterion offices and have been awarded the names of various female pop stars). Importantly, despite the new-technology bent of the company, Criterion's outlook is heavily console-centric with the creative management preferring to enthuse about arcade classics rather than the potential of new PC graphics cards.

"It's an ideal situation," muses Studio Head Fiona Sperry. "We have the technology to make graphically stunning games already under our roof, so

now we're concentrating our efforts on gameplay to match." Many games developers are still moaning about the difficulties encountered when programming PlayStation 2, but Criterion boasts it has no such problems because of its relatively long experience with the hardware.

"A lot of companies would like to switch from making PC games to PlayStation 2 games because that's where the market is," claims Creative Manager Alex Ward, "but they're struggling with the hardware. That's why they've been so keen to embrace Xbox. It's true, developing for PS2 is harder, but that's because the games have to be tighter. You can't be lazy."

PRODUCT PREVIEW

The first of Criterion's two games to hit the shelves is unfortunately bound by a publisher's agreement, sealing the mouths of Criterion employees and preventing screenshots from being printed here. However, *OPS2*'s brief glance suggested that a smooth, stylish, exciting game with a true next-gen feel is in the works.

Criterion is also hard at work on a second PlayStation 2 game. An arcade-style road racer, its working title is *SRC* – which stands for *Shiny Red Car* – but the team are also keen on calling it *Driving Hero*. If that sounds like a Japanese game name, the inference is deliberate. *SRC*'s major influences are Namco's *Ridge Racer*, Sega's *Outrun* and Konami's *Thrill Drive* – Japanese arcade driving classics the lot of 'em.

Alex Ward explains how Criterion will use its immersion in such exalted heritage to differentiate itself from the racing game pack: "The first question now asked of all new driving games, PlayStation 2 or not, is 'how is this going to beat *Gran Turismo*?' And the answer is that we can't. At the





That Shiny Red Car won't be shiny much longer once you've collided with that innocent goods vehicle at top speed. Messy.

moment I don't think anyone can. So we're going to do something completely different. We don't mean the opposite of *Gran Turismo* which would be rubbish cars and unrealistic physics, we mean an arcade-style game where players race to the finish through checkpoints."

For Ward and his Criterion team, the feeling that recent racing games have tended to prioritise style over content is paramount. "SRC is a simple concept. The aim is to speed like a madman through rush hour traffic. It's not mission-based and it's not a simulation. It's not about navigation, or fetch-and-carry, or spending time in the garage. It's about fun."

The team have a videotape of a car chase sequence from De Niro/Reno gangster film *Ronin*, which they study frequently for inspiration. Pushing fairly ordinary cars to their limit in a living environment is the key to SRC's appeal – it's an everyday fantasy.

"You know how every time you're stuck in a jam," muses Ward, "you get an urge to knock the car in front out of the way, overtake on the inside and drive like an arse? That's the ethic of SRC – driving dangerously in a real-life situation."

Before any of the tracks were finalised, the development team focused on their priority: vehicle handling. Using their prototype shiny red car – a hybrid of modern sports car designs – they advanced toward the holy grail of realistic yet enjoyable handling.

"It's important to have a game that anyone can play and immediately enjoy," emphasises Ward. "That's the hard part. The story, the concept, the graphics and the polish come later."

Fellow Creative Manager Paul Glancey expands, "We're then making sure each track plays well before we fill in any of the buildings and the scenery. If, later in the process, we decide a particular corner doesn't work, the designers won't be able to move it if there's a bloody great skyscraper in the way."

SHINY RED WRITE-OFF?

Talk of designing tracks is inseparable from the need to perfect traffic flow at every juncture. The stream of other vehicles will provide as much an obstacle to the driver as tough corners. Meanwhile, an innocuous-looking strait can become a challenge once populated by teetering HGVs.

"We don't want the traffic to be passive, we want it to be integral," says Games Designer, Chris Roberts. "There will be hotspots where the player will have to take risks at busy crossroads or decide whether to overtake lorries on corners. You'll be able to speed more easily on the freeway but we can create difficult situations where the most obvious racing line takes you directly into a stream of oncoming traffic."

And with this level of obstacles on the road, expect to encounter hefty collisions. "If you stop," warns Glancey, "it's going to be the result of a spectacular crash. You're not going to get stuck behind scenery."

Hence no licensed vehicles for SRC – manufacturers never give approval for their models to be involved in vicious prangs, despite crashing

without fear of guilt or injury being one of the joys of racing games. Thankfully, Criterion decided long ago that this thrill was more important than piloting a pixel-perfect model of the latest Lotus.

"Of course," concedes Ward, "there's nothing great about driving your car when it's shagged up. If you're trying to get a fast time and your bumper's dragging on the ground, you're just going to restart the race. The crashes will look exciting, you'll be able to relive your error in thrilling detail, but you'll only lose a second or so of race time and the car will reform."

Although the city streets of SRC seem ripe for short cuts, the team are keen to avoid any aspects of navigation during the race, as Roberts begins to explain.

"The choices are more along the lines of 'should I take this corner on the inside and risk ploughing into oncoming traffic or should I play safe and hang wide?' We don't want the player to feel they have to keep looking for short cuts, we want them to deal with the road ahead. It should present enough challenges."

SRC will be no lonely experience either. At any time there will be five other computer-controlled opponents attempting to beat you to the checkpoints. Two-player mode will simply put a second player in charge of one of these opposing vehicles at which point a campaign of dirty tricks will become even more relevant.

"You'll be able to use tactics to make your opponents crash," says Ward. "You can ram them or force them into a lane full of oncoming traffic." "If two of you are heading for a tiny gap between lorries, one of you is going to have to give," adds Roberts.

As mentioned earlier, the exact detail of SRC's vast courses is the final point on Criterion's agenda, but there will be three themed areas. The first, USA, will give the player a chance to sample all elements of the game from packed city centres, to open freeways to off-road segments. Europe's narrow, winding streets will be next, providing a series of hills to contend with as well as inclement weather and mad drivers. Finally, an oriental level will constitute the ultimate test with its contrast between high tech neon freeways and cramped backstreets on market day.

The simple street demo of SRC already up-and-running shows the core concept of the game works perfectly. A real feeling of speed and control is offered to the player and the temptation to do a *Ridge* and put foot to floor is overwhelming... until a fuel tanker rumbles across a junction and flattens you. Thus the seat-of-the-pants racing feel is translated immediately and with potentially devastating effect.

The plan is to create a game with uncomplicated appeal, but whose subtleties are so polished that an immense depth becomes apparent.

"We want to make mass-market games," concludes Ward, summarising the attitude of the new Criterion. "Why would you want to make a niche game on PlayStation 2? It's a big market and we want to grab as much of it as we can." □

//An innocuous-looking strait becomes a challenge once populated by teetering HGVs//



One of the first dev kits to arrive in the UK. Now called Britney, it's bolted to the floor.





Left: Creative Manager Alex Ward and MD David Lau-Kee. Below: Some inspiring car smash videos from the Criterion offices.



Q&A

DAVID LAU-KEE

Interview with David Lau-Kee, MD of Criterion.

How long have you been working with Criterion?

I established the company seven years ago. I was working in technical research for Canon at the time and saw a use for our discoveries in the games market.

Obviously you started out by creating game-related technology rather than games themselves...

We always had a vision and decided that to achieve it, we first had to understand the technology. It's taken us quite a while to move into pure games development ourselves but now we have a strong technological heritage in several fields to firmly anchor our game design.

Our specialism is 3D graphics – we lived and breathed 3D before 3D graphics became the norm on PCs. It was a natural progression for us to take that technology and apply it to different platforms like PlayStation 2. Now Criterion's technology department is exploring many other areas, for instance hardcore audio technology, which is really important. If DVDs are using Dolby Digital 5.1 sound, we want to offer that experience for PS2 games too.

I think if you spend too much time developing technology without a real sense of how and where it's going to be used, you can end up with a clever but unwanted product. So Criterion's dedicated game design studios complement the hardcore technological development wing.

How did your association with Sony first come about?

We've had an on-going relationship with Sony for six or seven years now. We were doing stuff for PSone in the early days. We shared certain visions and we became involved with PS2 perhaps about two-and-a-half years ago.

There seemed to be a close alignment between the direction of our software technology development and Sony's PS2 hardware development.

Obviously our parent company, Canon is Japanese, so we have been able to deal directly with Sony Computer Entertainment in Japan. Sony knows we can understand what matters to them culturally.

What are your aims for SRC and your as yet unnamed game, the first PS2 games to come from Criterion?

I think we can safely claim that these games are not going to be first generation PS2 games, not even second generation – we're already looking ahead of that because our technological background is so solid. The other crucial aspect for us is that these games are 'pick-up-and-play' titles which are immediately compelling. We just want to produce great games that people love and that will sell a few million into the bargain!

What technology are you working on at the moment that will affect PS2 games over the next few years?

At the moment our graphics teams are working on curved and smooth objects. We've got some really cute stuff in the labs right now that I think we'll be using with our own titles fairly soon. Fundamentally we can now stop thinking in terms of square shapes and polygons, instead we can finally think about natural shapes and natural movement. This goes hand in hand with texture and shine.

More than anything else, I want to explore the kind of special effects which allow you to get an impression of feeling an object, its temperature and its smell.

You're working with Sony on the mysterious GS Cube. We've heard a few things about this machine – it has the power of 25 PlayStation 2s,

for example. So is it just a computer graphics generating machine, or is it the future of game consoles?

The answer is both. Certainly from the game development and processing side of things there is a need to have high-powered tools that accelerate the development process and let designers concentrate on what really matters. GS Cube is just a prototype but you can see its use in the game development

//We can stop thinking in terms of polygons and think of natural shapes//

process for artists and designers to quickly change and modify things or experiment with new techniques.

Down the line it does hint at what future consoles could be capable of just because of its sheer power. PS2 is now more powerful than high-end workstations of three years ago. GS Cube gives a suggestion of what will be possible in a couple of years from now.

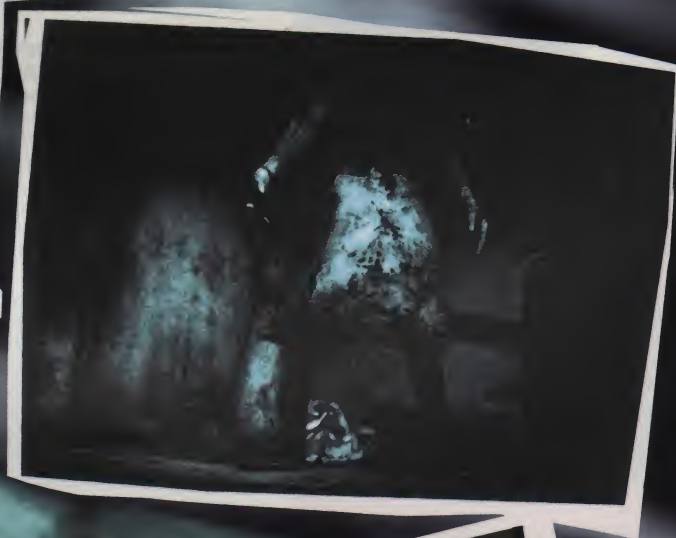
There haven't been any details released yet about how the GS Cube will be used and released commercially, but Criterion will be there every step of the way.

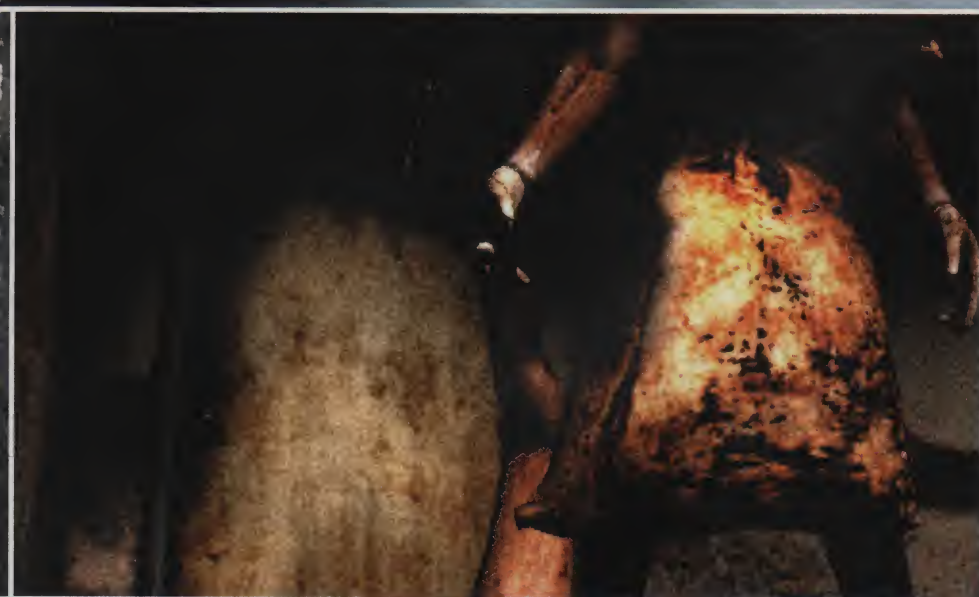
Do you perceive Sony to be at the forefront of innovation as far as videogames are concerned?

I certainly think that Sony is one of the companies pushing the boundaries. It's not just an incremental progression for Sony because it's investigating many different areas, genres and styles of games, it's pushing forward with the technology and it's culturally very aware. Sony is certainly on the leading edge.



Nice arse, shame about the face: *Silent Hill 2* is going to be one twisted game.





WORDS: AMOS WONG

NATURAL BORN CHILLERS

Two new games from Konami's KCET studio are being tailor-made to scare you 'mentally and spiritually'. OPS2 looks at how the developer of *Silent Hill 2* and *Shadow of Memories* is creating a new and sophisticated level of terror for the PS2.



When Sony talked about Emotion Engines, it was with the understanding that only on the third and fourth waves of PS2 software would developers begin to be able to inspire a more complex range of feelings in the player. Love, despair, envy, anger... words rarely used in the lexicon of videogame reviews. Fear, however, is an emotion that's been effectively

implemented in games for a few years now, largely due to the rapidly maturing nature of 3D graphics combined with visual and audio effects.

Undoubtedly one of the scariest games of recent times was KCET's *Silent Hill* for PSone. In the game Harry Mason and daughter Cheryl are in a car crash that leaves Harry injured and Cheryl missing. Dazed, he walks to the nearest town – the titular *Silent Hill* – for help. Shrouded in fog and inhabited by foul nightmarish visions, *Silent Hill* was Konami's answer to the *Resident Evil* phenomenon. A third-person puzzle-packed exercise in pure terror, *Silent Hill* was considered by many as the most terrifying game of its time. Deeply psychological gameplay, muted graphics and a jarring score still make *Silent Hill* one of the PSone's most innovative survival horror games.


//*Silent Hill 2* is no Hollywood schlock horror affair; it takes a truly cerebral approach to fear//

Now Konami's KCET, the development team that brought us *Silent Hill*, is planning a new wave of horror and is bringing its sophisticated terror techniques to two new eerie and unusual PS2 games. The first of which, *Silent Hill 2*, has already got other Konami development teams quaking: "if the trailer is anything to go by, we probably wouldn't be able to play it," says KCE Studios' Yutaka Haruki, producer of *Red*. "It's just too scary."

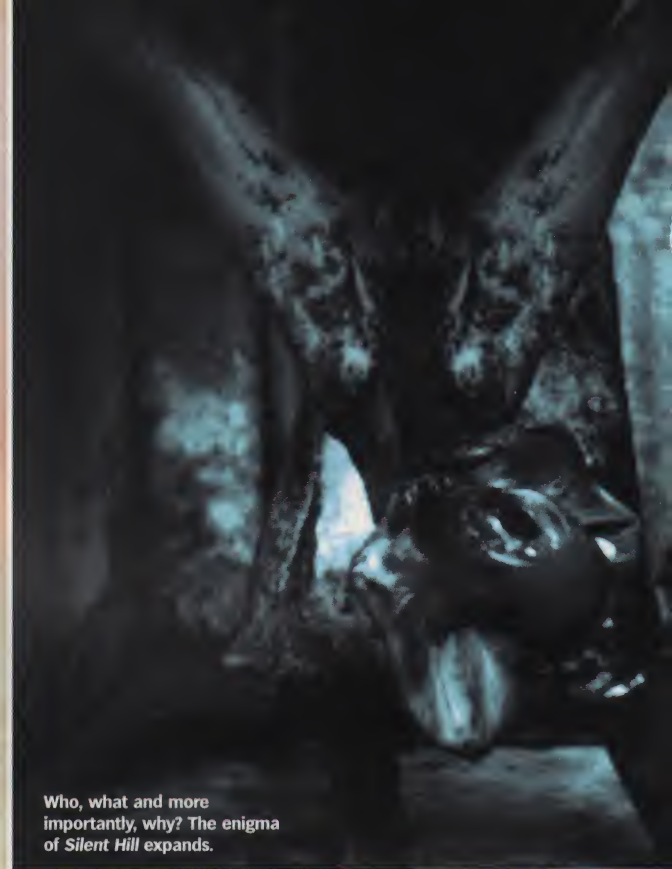
The trailer in question is as chilling as anything seen on the silver screen in recent memory: Writhing fleshy shapes emerge from the fog to greet protagonist James Sanderland. A barely-human torso is dragged along a filthy corridor by somebody – or something. A dead ringer for his wife caresses Sanderland's face. Nothing wrong with that – except that the aforementioned Mrs Sanderland died three years earlier.

DÉJÀ VU

Assistant Director of *Silent Hill 2*, Masashi Tsuboyama, is keen to establish realism as a way to scare players witless again. "By using the enhanced graphics PlayStation 2 offers us, we can make creatures look slippery and moist. You could imagine how horrible they'd be to touch, just by looking at them. The fog that covers an entire town devoid of people is vital to the game and it has to seem real to generate that atmosphere of foreboding"

Although the adventure is set in *Silent Hill* again, the town will be the only narrative link to the original PSone game. According to Director Akihiro Imamura, there'll be no cameos from previous cast members, nor will players explore the same 'levels', such as the abandoned school. "Perhaps if you walk around, you might get a feeling that events of the first game took place nearby," he remarks mysteriously, "but things will be different." 





Who, what and more importantly, why? The enigma of *Silent Hill* expands.



ABE'S ODYSSEY

Further evidence of the *Silent Hill 2* team's determination to avoid tedious Hollywood reference points is provided by their citing of author Kobo Abe as a major inspiration. Kobo Abe (who died in 1993) is regarded as one of Japan's premier 20th Century novelists. Despite his heavyweight literary reputation, it's not too hard to see how his surreal works fit into the *Silent Hill 2* equation. His masterpiece, *Woman In The Dunes* (1962), concerns a couple imprisoned in a giant sand-hole, forced to shovel sand for eternity. Other novels include *Face Of Another* (1964) in which a mask worn to cover a facial deformity begins to control the personality of the wearer. The protagonist of *Kangaroo Notebook* (1991) suffers an even more humiliating fate, when he discovers radishes sprouting from his shins before being propelled on a journey to hell accompanied by a sexy nurse obsessed with collecting blood.

Designer Masahiro Ito comments that while the setting looks like your typical American town, "The kind of fear you'll experience in the game is definitely Japanese in flavour." The infamous likes of David Lynch and even Francis Bacon are mentioned as influences, but the development team also cite the Japanese literature of authors Kobo Abe and Seiichi Yokomizo (see Abe's Odyssey) as a major inspiration. *Silent Hill 2* is no Hollywood shock horror affair; it takes a truly cerebral approach to fear.

The difference between Eastern and American scare tactics in movies and videogames is best summed up by Ito-san with a baseball analogy: "I guess the American style is more direct. The fear is generated almost entirely by an image. It's like throwing a strike ball straight and hard down the middle. Japanese horror doesn't necessarily rely purely on the image itself, the fear is instilled in other ways. It's like a curve ball."

TERRIFYING REALITY

The *Silent Hill 2* team is keen to expand upon the philosophy of the first title in order to offer fresh experience from the plethora of 'survival horror' games crowding the market. They've also looked back with a harshly critical eye at their own first effort. Ito elaborates, "If you look at a game like *Resident Evil* - *Silent Hill* included - the emphasis is still on facing a creature and blasting away with your weapon. It becomes less about horror, more about the exhilaration and enjoyment of fighting. We'd prefer to avoid that state of affairs with *Silent Hill 2* and hopefully the shift in emphasis will be obvious. We don't just mean improving the visuals - we want to make players feel

very uneasy at being placed in this really eerie situation. We want to scare them mentally and spiritually."

The team remain tight-lipped about the specifics of their scaremongering though - the game is not due out in Japan until at least the summer and Imamura tells us, "We can't talk about it in more detail because it will spoil the game." Nevertheless, it is already apparent that the enemies have changed markedly. Ito worked on the first game's creatures and in hindsight reflects, "They're all typical horror game monsters. They are mutants with tentacles or whatever. I guess they're typically American in style." Ito wants to distance himself from well-worn monster stereotypes, that can be traced back to the shapeshifters from films like John Carpenter's *The Thing* and zombies in George A Romero's *Dawn of the Dead*. "I would like to express the creatures not through appearances, but motion," he states, preferring classical Japanese horror techniques as his prime influence for *Silent Hill 2*. "I want to convey their evil in the way their bodies curl up, flex and twitch."

BLOOD AND CENSORSHIP

Objections from the Japanese censorship board about *Silent Hill 2* have already been expressed based purely on the implied unpleasantness of the trailer. Imamura is aware of his responsibilities and the need to set limits, but doesn't want restrictions placed on his work. "It's a personal, internal struggle. I want to push boundaries but I also have to be aware of society's reaction. I am happy to set limits but who knows if they concur with those implemented by the censorship board? Of course, we don't support violence. We try to take different approaches to scare people without resorting to brutality. But people have to also remember that it's a game. There will be monsters. You will eventually have to face and fight them, so obviously there'll be blood. We don't want to destroy the realism of the game world."

Of course, the *Silent Hill 2* team couldn't keep the scares at a constant level without PlayStation 2's capabilities, but Imamura points out that the machine isn't almighty. As he suggests, developing for PS2 is a matter of balance, "For every great effect you achieve, there is a trade-off in another area. In the first game, we were forced to hide backgrounds with fog because

“I want to convey the creatures’ evil in the way their bodies curl, flex and twitch” – Masahiro Ito//

TERROR FIRMA

Five more games going bump in the night on PlayStation 2.

Resident Evil

Code: Veronica X

(Capcom/Capcom Eurosoft)
Could this be the return of the original artform? Capcom present the fourth and finest instalment of the flesh-munching fear-fest that started it all. Claire Redfield fights the most horrifying mutants you have ever seen.



Devil May Cry

(Capcom/Capcom Eurosoft)
A devil hunter with not-so-holy blood coursing through his veins takes on evil and does battle with shape-shifting demon morphs in gothic cathedrals. Resident Evil's Shinji Mikami is the producer: need we say more?



Blood: The Last Vampire

(Production IG/TBC)
Published by SCEI, Blood follows a Japanese Buffy, who slays creatures of the night, but in a samurai style. This 'interactive anime' adventure comes from the people who gave us Ghost In The Shell.



Extermination

(SCEI/SCEE)

This 'panic action' adventure tracks a deadly alien entity through the frozen wastes of the South Pole and derelict laboratories. Extermination's team boasts developers from the original Resident Evil.



Onimusha: Warlords

(Capcom/Capcom Eurosoft)
More action based than other Capcom efforts – but if armies of mutant monsters lurking in the dungeons of a mysterious Japanese castle don't give you goosebumps, your blood's probably already frozen.



The 'hero' of Silent Hill 2, James Sanderland – one seriously disorientated man...

we wanted to do so many other things at once and the PSone couldn't have coped. Yet even with the PS2, we'll be using similar techniques because we can't make everything perfect simultaneously."

Tsuboyama-san offers an example: "If a character sprays bullets in every direction, does that mean you have to make all the glass in the surroundings shatter? The answer would probably be 'no', because if you strive for 100% physical reality in the game, all the processing power will be used for that feature alone." Although he's quick to stress that, "Since the PS2 is much more powerful, the fog and the lighting does look much better than before." He wants the fog to be almost alive, enveloping objects in its murky embrace while shadows shift and change shape in real-time.


The team at KCET is well on the way to developing a highly-respected and distinctive series franchise, but despite the appeal of imminent online possibilities, their thoughts gone beyond their current objectives. "I personally have no idea about what's going to happen with Silent Hill 3," Tsuboyama states unequivocally. "Everything I've come up with is going into this game."

ON THE FLIP SIDE

The second game that will come out of Konami's KCET offices this year is Shadow Of Memories, but again this title will go against all scary stereotypes that have been seen previously. Like her colleagues on the Silent Hill 2 team, Shadows Of Memories's director Junko Kawano also wants to challenge gaming conventions. It could not be classified as horror, but it's as spooky and disorientating as anything that Imamura and team are creating.

Before the conclusion of the opening scene we see lead character, Eike Kusch stabbed in the back. He awakens in another dimension, and is given the opportunity to defy fate from a bodiless voice. Eike assumes these are the words of the Devil offering him a Faustian pact, but the voice laughs off the accusation, simply explaining that 'He's here to help'. Eike is then given a digipad – think Al's calculator in Quantum Leap – enabling him to travel in time and is returned to his current dimension 30 minutes before his murder, and has to solve puzzles in order to apprehend his killer. This is only the beginning of an adventure that will take Eike back to the middle ages...





Not everyone looks sexy in a nurse's uniform...

→ The lack of combat in *Shadow Of Memories* puts the emphasis on puzzle-solving, character development and story line. For example, characters encountered way back in the mists of time will still look strangely familiar to those in the first level. "We deliberately made their faces identical so you could tell," Junko explains, adding with a laugh that, "if there's an obnoxious character in the present, chances are it's something that runs in the family."

Few games boast serious literary antecedents but Junko was keen to lend the story of *Shadow Of Memories* greater weight than the cutesy faux-medieval fluff which forms the setting of most RPGs. "The game's motif is *Faust*," she explains. "It's obviously not a modern story and I wanted an appropriate historical atmosphere." Faust is the hero (or anti-hero) of a classic Western legend of a German necromancer who sells his soul to the devil in return for knowledge and power. The tale's many incarnations vary from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's original *Faust*, to Christopher Marlowe's oft-quoted play *Dr Faustus*, or even in more contemporary cinematic adaptations such as Alan Parker's 1987 film *Angel Heart* (and, er, *Bedazzled*).

Junko goes on to say, "I wasn't originally intending to create a time travel game. I was interested in making a game with a historical atmosphere which I could link to the present." The use of reincarnation had been one option as a theme, but time travel gave more choice to the player. Underpinning her decisions during the creative process was the most important motive of all, "I wanted to avoid the typical style of 3D horror games."

Two trips to Germany and inspiration from many travel brochures were required to replicate the environment and craft the story. "I studied a lot of European history in order to avoid the time-frame of my story clashing with

major historical events," she explains. "We didn't want the game to take place during a time of war for example. The game's set in a fictitious town and it needs to have a very insular atmosphere. It isn't necessarily located in Germany, although it will naturally have a central European feel."

BRING IT TO LIFE

With the shift from PSone to PS2, Junko is particularly proud of the expressions and performance of the animated cast who react in real-time. "It's definitely a feature you could only realise on PS2. Once we created the skeleton of each character, moving them wasn't too difficult. The challenge lay in imbuing them with a distinct sense of character. We wanted to make the cast members very individual, so I ensured that the artists in charge of a particular character kept on assigning them little quirks."

In creating a good time-hopping yarn that keeps people guessing, Junko comments that, "The most important thing is to build a consistent story. Obviously because of the time travel, there are occasions where paradoxes and discrepancies could start destroying the story. Everything needs to make sense to the player." She refuses to reveal any more details regarding the story but says that people who've played the game comment that you have a real feeling of weaving your own story together. "It's not a set path, it's as if you're writing it as you go. By travelling back in time, completing the objectives and returning to the present, you'll discover why the present is so confused." Unlike many games, there will be more than one way to solve the puzzles. She continues, "Let's say you know someone is going to try to stab you. You receive advice that you should find an iron plate to stick underneath your shirt. If you can't locate an iron plate, maybe a frying pan will suffice. Different locations and different items can achieve the same result."

The game's title has undergone four changes since its original name of *Walpurgis Nacht*. The meaning of this phrase, from *Faust*, is the German translation for a feast where devils and demons get together to celebrate, sort of like our Halloween. And although Elke may not have exactly sold his soul to the Devil but his spooky, supernatural adventures in *Shadow Of Memories* will make you feel like you've been to the seventh circle of hell and back. Konami certainly has set the scene for a spooky 2001, dare you sleep in darkness ever again? □

//“We want to make players feel uneasy at being placed in this eerie situation. We want to scare them mentally and spiritually” – Masahiro Ito//

SHADOW OF MEMORIES

A tangled web of time and a meeting with the devil himself – here are the first impressions from OPS2's first play of KCET's eerie adventure.



Eike Kusch knows what it feels like to be stabbed in the back.



What could be more terrifying than *Silent Hill*'s visceral ooze, distorted reality and clinging fog? What could be more frightening than an abandoned hospital where the shadows lean out to stroke your skin and whimpers of children seep from behind locked doors? How about weaving a tangled web through time, cascading uncontrollably through the ages, changing fate, desperately trying to retain a grasp on reality as it crumbles through your fingers, as you watch the very fabric of the universe unravel into chaos and endlessness?

Now coat the cold panic of losing control of one's own destiny with a thin veneer of reality and things get scary.

For instance, to prevent yourself being slain by a mysterious assassin stalking you through time, you are required to surround yourself with people and not remain isolated. If you fail you are killed and forced to relive the moment again and again until you get it right but if you succeed you find yourself in the town square with a small crowd watching a masked juggler. This prevents your murder. Normal enough? Well no. During your time warping you'll be required to disguise yourself to prevent you from bumping into a past or future you, therefore throwing your fate off into further tangled tangents. And the masked juggler, the man who conveniently appears to form a crowd thus preventing your death? You

guessed it. A future you. Convoluted isn't it? And what if the assassin trying to kill you is in fact yourself attempting to prevent you embarking on a doomed eternity of repetition? Oh what a tangled web time travel is.

Although a departure from *Silent Hill*, *SOM* still shares a few similarities and gameplay is faithful to its foggy counterpart. The map system, controls and camera angles are virtually identical but you actually feel as if you're actively following Eike, watching his every move. This is even more evident when the camera shifts to places like inside a tree canopy, peering at Eike as he converses with a character. You're watching him.

The anonymous European town that has our hero forever repeating his destiny is home to a variety of people, but whether it is the animation, choice of voice actors, our paranoia due to *Silent Hill* or some genuine ill-intent on behalf of the townsfolk, each and every one of them are utterly unnerving.

Minus the clinging fog, minus headless babies and distant screams from agonised demons, minus winged beasts, witches and crucified people, *Shadow Of Memories* still retains the same essence as *Silent Hill* that enables the game to crawl under your skin and then chill you to the core. Part mystery, part Faustian folklore and part ultimate nightmare, *Shadow Of Memories* promises something exquisitely disturbing. ■ SR



Stabbed, set on fire, and then confronted by his own future self. Eike's problems never end.





Legion. The Dark Ages have never looked so bright.



R2R: R2. Well are you going be the one to call him Wacko?



Midway's drab offices. It's what's inside that counts.



WORDS: PAUL FITZPATRICK

WELCOME TO THE HOUSE OF FUN

In an industry where the only link between a company's games is usually its logo, Midway is carving a distinctive niche for itself, with just a little help from its past.



The King of Pop himself, Michael Jackson, loved Midway Games's original OTT boxing sim *Ready 2 Rumble* so much that he approached the development team and asked to feature in the sequel. For no fee. There aren't that many games that would provoke such a passionate reaction, however good they are, so why this title and this company? The likely answer lies at the heart of what makes the best videogames. Why do we

get hooked on them, and when they're as good as they can be, what is it that feeds our addiction? The answer is fundamental – sheer, adrenaline-coursing fun.

As game hardware gets beefier it, the ante is upped for developers. More realism and greater complexity are required – both good things and obvious signs of progress. But much as there's a deserved place for the exhaustive automotive tweaking of *Gran Turismo* and the dense tapestry of *Final Fantasy IX*, there are times when you don't want to devote four hours to fine-tuning a 1982 Toyota Starlet or searching through a devastated future world for a magic amulet. There are occasions where you want to get your mates 'round, crack open the beers, boot up a game and have a blast. No tutorials, no waffle. Just, well you know. Fun. And it's an idea that has been embraced enthusiastically by Midway – and for good reason.

See, Midway is no ordinary games company. It has a rare feature for the industry of videogames: an illustrious arcade heritage alongside its console endeavours. Midway's earliest corporate ancestor, Williams Entertainment, was set up in the circuit board-free days of 1942 to recondition pinball machines. Between 1946 and 1998 it produced over 500 of its own designs, pausing briefly to make a 1981 debut in the fledgling world of videogames with a modest little blockbuster by the name of *Defender*. It was the first game to feature a world and events occurring outside the confines of the screen, with its inventive use of a radar. It is still one of the most successful arcade titles of all time. Meanwhile Bally Midway, a then competitor, had already scored some notable successes of its own. Not least was an early licence of a Japanese game you might also have heard of: *Space Invaders* (1978). It was an unprecedented hit, branding the sideways-shuffling aliens on the title page of videogame history and eventually achieving iconic status the world over.

PAST INSPIRATIONS

The next ten years would see Williams continue to thrill arcade junkies with games such as *Robotron 2084*, *Sinistar*, *Moon Patrol* and *Joust*. These are just a few of the pocket-emptying, life-changing titles that influence the developers of today. When Williams bought Bally/Midway's amusement game division in 1988, the former competitor brought with it a wealth of its own titles including one standout game: the Bondian overkill of *Spyhunter* – an excellent, top-down scrolling excuse for hardware-assisted road rage that fused racer and shoot-'em-up to innovative and sweaty-palmed effect. Since then Midway Games has carried the company's arcade and console videogames banner, but the successes have continued, particularly with the supremely gory but undeniably cool *Mortal Kombat* franchise. There are also extreme sports titles that made showing off and cheating an integral part of the game, and that gave the world versions of American sports that actually make sense.

If arcade games such as these have a defining characteristic, it's their economic impulse to hook the casual and hardcore punter instantly and refuse to let go until they've not only spent their loose change but their bus fare home as well. And the instant gameplay that





swells the bottom line on the high street and along blustery seaside promenades also makes for immersive, in-your-face entertainment on your console. Midway's Home Entertainment division has been bridging the gap between arcade and living room for years, and now PS2 has been targeted for a major dose of entertainment, Midway-style. Boxing game *Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2* is already doing the business and there are number of other titles bubbling away on the hot stove of development. Two of these in particular demand a closer look: *Legion: Legend of Excalibur* and *Spyhunter: The Return*. So, after a bizarrely extravagant Las Vegas launch for *Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2* (see Viva Las Rumble) we travelled to San Diego and the offices of Midway's Home Entertainment division.

You'd reasonably expect the people who made games like *NFL Blitz 2000* and *R2R: R2* to work somewhere resembling the chaos of a testosterone-fuelled frat house combined with Disney Castle replete with flaming turrets and a *Dukes of Hazzard* door bell. It's a little surprising then, to pull up to a loose campus of bland, predominantly single storey, flat-plan offices straddling the main thoroughfare of an industrial estate on the outskirts of San Diego. It has been rumoured that despite the game being developed by Paradigm Entertainment in Dallas, *OPS2* may just get an exclusive peek at the embryonic *Spyhunter: The Return*.

However, shortly after being ushered into a monochromatic boardroom that a would make a Bond villain proud, Michael Gottlieb, *Spyhunter's* Producer, makes it clear that this won't be happening. It's too soon. Then he leaves. It's up to Andy Kaffka, the Associate Producer to answer the inevitable question: *Spyhunter* – why such a long wait for its sequel? "We're setting our sights pretty high and we really don't want to rush something out," he explains. With 17 years since the original that's a lot of preparation time in anyone's book. It does make you wonder what the new game is going to be like.

EAGER TO SEE

Kaffka begins to set out the bare bones of the game. "It's going to have eight levels, four different vehicles: the car, the boat and their secondary vehicles, the motorcycle and the jetski, so when your

main transport is damaged, you'll have a means of escape..." The presentation is then brought abruptly to a halt when without warning, Gottlieb walks back into the room and asks Andy to "Fire it up." It seems his enthusiasm for the game has got the better of him and who can argue with that? Minutes later *OPS2* is looking at early code of the game's Venice level, which is somewhat better than being simply told about it.

First impressions reveal that the transition into 3D has done the *Spyhunter* franchise no harm whatsoever. The car is a sleuth friendly one-off – part Mercedes CLK, part McLaren F1 – and even at this early stage it moves at a fair old pace. Take it to the canal edge and it transforms smoothly into a speed boat to continue the mission, with a realistically chaotic wake spilling out behind it and other vessels it passes. There are no enemies as yet, but we do get to see one of the many promised short cuts as the *Spyhunter* car interprets the rules of the road in a uniquely destructive way. Although it does have a way to go, the game looks

2



4

AROUND THE BEND.

So what exactly do those Midway people have in store for your PS2?

1. SPYHUNTER: THE RETURN

Is it a boat? Is it a car? No it's the timely resurrection of the original sleuthian racer.

Expected: June 2001

2. LEGION: LEGEND OF EXCALIBUR

The World of King Arthur gets the *Command & Conquer* treatment and then puts you right in the middle of the action a la *Dynasty Warriors 2*.

Expected: November 2001

3. CART FURY: CHAMPIONSHIP RACING

F1 with flaming power boosts, sneaky short cuts and spectacular crashes. Fast and, yes, furious.

Expected: August 2001

4. ARCTIC THUNDER

Think *SSX* on snow bikes and you're almost there. Racing through the White House is one of the more normal tracks in this winter wonderland spin-off of the *Off-Road Thunder* franchise.

Expected: August 2001

5. NBA HOOPZ

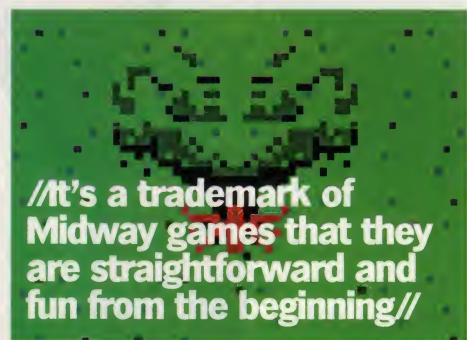
Midway's Sports Asylum label lives up to its name with an outlandish basketball game. Tournament mode, mini-games and create-a-player add depth to the action. Think PSone's *NBA Jam* – with knobs on.

Expected: March 2001

6. GAUNTLET: DARK LEGACY

The arcade sequel to the popular *Gauntlet Legends* is coming to PS2 for all the multiplayer Valkyrie/Dwarf/Knight/Jester action you can handle.

Expected: May 2001



OLD GAMES SKOOL

How Midway got all that arcade know-how.

If you were born after 1980 you're probably wondering what these pixelated graphics mean in 2001. The rest of you will probably be lost in arcade reminiscence. These are some of the classic games that made Midway what it is today. Go to www.shockwave.com to play a selection. Go retro.



Defender, 1980



Joust, 1982



Moon Patrol, 1982



Spyhunter, 1983



Sinistar, 1982



Galaxians, 1979

ON THE HORIZON?

And a couple of titles we'd like to see on PS2.

7. THE GRID

Deathmatch action in a virtual TV studio for cash, prizes and the chance to see another day. Yes, you are the weakest link. Eat lead. No confirmation as yet, but OPS2 confidently predicts this one won't be able to stay away from PS2.

8. OFF-ROAD THUNDER

Is there a pattern forming here? Could be. Bally, brash racing with power boosts as standard. Only Midway makes racing this much fun. Can't wait.





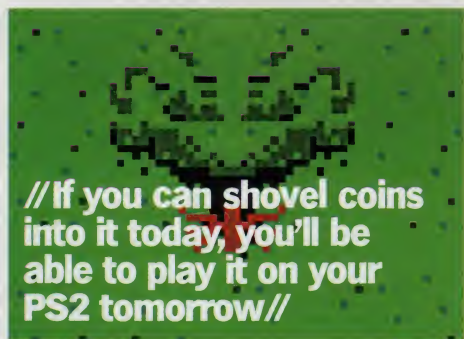
VIVA LAS RUMBLE!

Where do you launch a totally OTT, cartoonish boxing game? In the OTT cartoon boxing capital of the world: Las Vegas of course!

If you are slap bang in the middle of a desert and see the Eiffel Tower, an erupting volcano, Venetian gondolas and the entire New York skyline with a roller coaster going through the Chrysler Building, the chances are you're either a) dying of dehydration and your baking brain is hallucinating or b) on a press trip for the launch of Midway's festival of pugilism, **Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2**.

In the main auditorium of the Aladdin Casino Resort, a boxing ring has been set up with a video screen poised above and a DJ spinning 'choons' to the left. Positioned incongruously in the centre of the canvas are two comfy armchairs and widescreen TV.

Murmurs of a Frank Bruno comeback are quashed as the Rumble Man himself, announcer Michael Buffer, steps up to introduce the title fight between R2R veteran Afro Thunder (Midway sound man, Orpheus) and NBA giant Shaquille O'Neal. After hours of build-up the fight begins as the lippy Thunder succumbs to a punishing, console-administered Shaq attack. Almost as soon as it begins, Afro Thunder's on-screen self is chewing canvas and down for the count. Crestfallen, Thunder is forced to concede his title and hand over his prized afro pick. Oh, the humanity! Now that's how you launch a game.



team] have designed this control mechanism that means you can successfully navigate between multiple units. You get into the groove by taking a character into battle and hacking away. You then go to the next guy and he's trying to tear down castle walls, and so on. You're not just issuing commands. You're fighting through it all." In the corner of the room a beautifully rendered knight walks, light glinting off his armour, against the pitch black lack of context that is the PS2 development kit screen. And this is an in-game character.

So what of other games coming PS2-wards? Put simply, Midway's arcade and console game line-ups are inextricably joined at the hip. Simply put, if you can shovel coins in it today, you'll almost certainly be able to put it in your PS2 tomorrow. The best thing about this strategy is that you don't have to take anyone's word for it that these games are worth a gander - you don't even have to wait for their PS2 launch. Just pop down to the arcade and road test them there. After all, that's what Midway's been doing for decades. □



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Quote: OPS2FEB



A dynamic scene from the game Unreal Tournament showing several characters in a dark, industrial environment. A large, green, mechanical leg is prominent in the foreground, while other characters are seen in the background, some holding weapons and others in motion.

UNREAL TOURNAMENT

From PC to PS2. How does it fare?

» We reveal all over the page...

REVIEWS

The World's Greatest PlayStation 2 Game Buyer's Guide

Our ratings

If it's for PlayStation 2, and heading for a store near you, we've played it, argued about it, and, ultimately, judged it. Every issue, we look at the latest games and rate them out of 10, like so:

- 10/10 Utterly essential
- 9/10 Hugely satisfying and entertaining
- 8/10 Highly recommended. Definitely worth your money
- 7/10 Good, solid fare, and well worth a gander
- 6/10 Decent enough, and fine for fans of the genre
- 5/10 Of some merit
- 4/10 Poor, but may still have the odd moment
- 3/10 Extremely disappointing
- 2/10 To be avoided
- 1/10 Beer mat

StarPlayer

Awarded to any game that gets 9/10 or over. This is just our little way of trying to hammer home what is a fairly simple message: Get this game, and get it now.

Issue four: new releases

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UNREAL



REVIEW
UNREAL TOURNAMENT

TOURNAMENT

Can this blood-spattered first-person shooter make a rocket jump from the PC and capture the PS2's flag?

Publisher: Infogrames
Developer: Epic Games
Price: £39.99
Players: 1-4
Out: Now
Web site:
www.epicgames.com

Back story

Developer Epic Games began its franchise back in 1998 with *Unreal* for the PC setting new standards in first-person shooters. This was followed by the 1999 PC release of *Unreal Tournament*. The incredible-looking *Unreal 2* is currently in development and should be with PC owners by the summer – PS2 gamers will have to wait a little longer for what could be a genre-shattering FPS.



It's a Saturday evening and as usual, families are settling down in front of the television to watch their favourite programme. A jaunty theme tune strikes up and a glittering, silver logo zooms onto the screen, signalling to an eager audience that another episode of the top-rated Liandri Mining Corporation show is about to begin.

A snarling Jim Davidson suddenly lurches forward clutching a chainsaw and wearing what appears to be a butcher's apron made from jagged plate metal. His manic eyes stare angrily at the camera for a moment, then with an ear-piercing scream of blood lust, the cockney host opens the proceedings by dropping a tattered, burning flag. Suddenly, a parade of characters from all corners of the universe materialise in an arena made to look like the Royal Variety Performance. In seconds, live cameras are clouded in gore as contestants begin hacking, shooting and exploding chunks out of each other with a sickening array of weapons.

This is the violent, brutal 24th Century world of *Unreal Tournament*. Infogrames' frantic first-person shooter has been making a killing on the PC since Autumn 1999, winning a trophy cabinet of

prestigious awards and even pipping Id's *Quake III Arena* to the top spot in many hardcore gamers' top ten lists. But has this flagship title survived the transfer to the PlayStation 2, or will gamers be hunting down other 3D blasters for their deathmatch fix?

Well, the great news is that *Unreal Tournament* on the PS2 is damn good, with over 50 beautifully designed arenas, 21 characters, six very different game options and 12 weapons of destruction. Unfortunately there are a few irritations concerning the frame rate and the 'fuzzy' appearance of the graphics – but more of that later.

The first thing players of the PC original will notice is that PlayStation 2 *Unreal Tournament* has been given a console-friendly overhaul – pull-down Windows menus have gone, replaced by a much more approachable arcade-style appearance. In another progression, hard-fought battles are rewarded with unlocked characters, maps, cheats and different game 'ladders' that include deathmatch tournaments, Capture The Flag competitions plus other juicy challenges.

Developer Epic Games' decision to include this so-called 'Toy Box' arrangement, makes *UT* a very



"We'll keep the red flag flying high". Protect your base in Capture The Flag games at all cost.

REVIEW

UNREAL TOURNAMENT



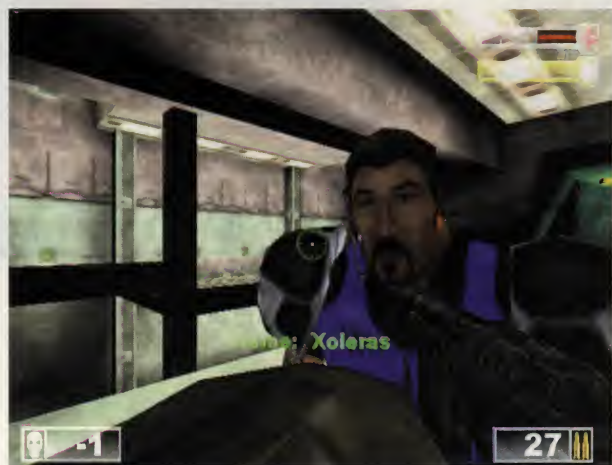
Domination is a manic 'King of the Hill' game. Keep these control points red to beat the enemy.

WHAT A MESS

In *UT* there's more blood and guts than at your local abattoir. Trust us.

Unreal Tournament is blessed with some of the goriest (and funniest) ultraviolence this side of a Paul Verhoeven flick. Aim a rocket launcher at an unfortunate foe and witness them splitting into an exploding collection of spleens and spines, splashing nearby walls with gloopy human remains. The sound effects add to the dark, gruesome atmosphere with horrifying screams of "Medic!" followed by the sound of bones cracking and heads bursting open. Sweet.

"You are inferior." Challenge mode pits you against the most lethal killers in the Galaxy.



Up close and personal: The graphics detail on the characters' faces and clothing is mightily impressive.

addictive proposition, allowing players to dip in and out of various games as they want, in order to uncover more and more secrets.

The main course of any FPS banquet is a classic every-psycho-for-themselves deathmatch and *Unreal Tournament* doesn't fail to serve up a blood-rare feast. A deathmatch basically involves players blasting or 'fragging' their opponents for points, with the winner of the game being the first warrior to reach a certain number of kills.

Players must first pick a character from a gallery that includes Trinity-lookalike Idina and buffsome Tom Cruise clone Brock – more varied personalities including killer cyborgs from hell while hideously deformed aliens can be unlocked later on in the game. Finally, before the flesh can fly, gamers must choose from four skill levels ranging from Novice to Inhuman, determining the intelligence and ferociousness of your computer-controlled 'bot' opponents. For anyone new to this

kind of 3D shoot-'em-up, *UT* has kindly packed in a tutorial on the first rung of each game ladder.

Here you'll be taken through the tournament objectives, allowed time to get accustomed to the Head-up Display (HUD) that shows in-game info such as health and an opportunity to fully configure your character's controls before you start the tournament for real. On the Dual Shock 2, the best set-up is probably using the two analogue sticks to strafe, look around and move, with **△** and **○** to fire. However, gamers used to the mouse/keyboard combination that our PC brethren enjoy can use any keyboard and mouse

//Deathmatches in *UT* are an incredibly enjoyable laugh-out-loud experience//



Power-ups include the awesome Damage Amplifier and Invisibility (above) allowing sneaky 'creeping up from behind' behaviour.

with USB connections. Plug them straight into the PS2's USB ports and get blasting. It functions like a dream and finally gives PS2 gamers the option to use the controller configuration they find most comfortable – 'nuff respect to Epic.

GUNNING FOR JOY

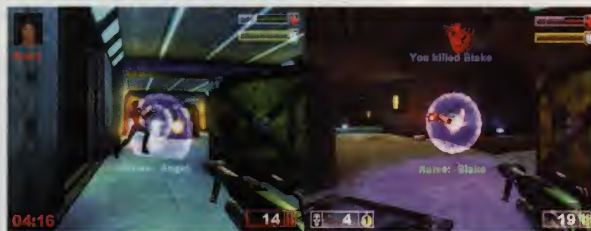
The tutorial also gives you a trigger-pumping taste of some of the 12 different weapons on offer (See Six Of The Best). Each terror toy has two fire modes allowing you to choose the manner in which you destroy enemies, bringing in a huge element of tactics and skill. So, for example, the Flak Cannon's first fire mode coughs out shards of red hot metal for close-quarter killing, whereas the second fire mode shoots projectiles that explode and obliterate victims quite a distance away. Other items to look out for include the usual smattering of health boosts, armour and shields, Scuba Gear for breathing underwater, a Damage Amplifier for increasing the destructive power of all weapons and a nifty Translocator, for Scotty from *Star Trek* beaming-type behaviour.

Deathmatches in *UT* are an incredibly enjoyable laugh-out-loud experience, delivering a manic, violent battle through some expertly constructed levels. The 12 maps take you on a journey to distant starships, creaky wooden galleons, eerily deserted space stations and multi-level industrial factories teeming with platforms, teleports, underwater tunnels and vertigo-inducing walkways. Ingenious interactive environmental weapons are also included, such as a particularly lethal pressure chamber which can be activated to trap and burst open unwary rivals who stupidly wander inside.

As you progress up the deathmatch ladder, ever more involving and complex arenas are revealed, in addition to opponents who increase in number and intelligence. The AI of the bots is so

SIX OF THE BEST

Unreal Tournament has a dirty dozen of weapons to strap to your player character and unleash on unsuspecting enemies – each with a dual fire option. OPS2 picks its six favourite technological bringers of death.



SHOCK RIFLE

1. Fires a bright white/blue deadly energy beam.
2. Fires slower energy projectiles that cause more damage. The Shock Rifle also has a combo fire attack, that creates large explosions for more 'splash damage'.

Destructive power: ☆☆☆



BIO RIFLE

1. Fires clumps of deadly green sludge that effectively stick to walls and floors before exploding.
2. Fires an even larger clump of the same deadly gunk that suddenly bursts into multiple piles of toxic muck covering a wider range.

Destructive power: ☆☆☆



ROCKET LAUNCHER

1. Fires a missile that explodes on contact. Keep fire button pressed to launch up to six projectiles, or wait until the crosshair goes red to fire a homing missile that follows enemies.
2. Throws out grenades that bounce around then explode after a pause of a few seconds.

Destructive power: ☆☆☆



FLAK CANNON

1. Fires chunks of hot, rusty shrapnel to splatter opponents ruthlessly at very close range.
2. Launches an impressive shrapnel grenade that explodes on contact with the combatant of your choice.

Destructive power: ☆☆☆



SNIPER RIFLE

1. Normal rifle shot.
2. Sniper sight that allows you to zoom in on unsuspecting foes. Great for those notorious head shots.

Destructive power: ☆☆☆



REDEEMER

1. Launches a miniature nuclear missile.
2. Launches a missile that can be controlled via a first-person view for steering round corners, up stairs and even down the throat of terrified opposition warriors.

Destructive power: ☆☆☆



Dead pretty: Many maps are surrounded by deadly lava pits and plasma fields that can tear human beings into tiny bits.

fine-tuned, you may find yourself shooting at a rival, who will then run away, circle right around you and start shooting you from behind. Your heart genuinely starts to beat faster as you run, leap and dodge gunfire, square up to an enemy with a fully-loaded Shock Rifle and reduce them to a skittering grisly mess of component body parts with a blinding burst of concentrated energy. Combine the full-on nature of the gameplay with the gut-wrenching sound effects of your weapons, techno-metal soundtrack, plus noisy taunts from the other contestants ('You suck!') and the overall effect is just like a futuristic gladiatorial war zone broadcast live by MTV.

Although the deathmatch is the ultimate and most important aspect to *UT*, there are four other tournament 'ladders' to appreciate. Domination is



A warning flashes on-screen when your flag is in enemy hands. Kill them and kill them good.



There's an incredible range of map settings including this concrete urban death maze.



//There's plenty of fun to be had decorating the walls of battle arenas with entrails//

☐ a game where two teams (Red and Blue) battle to possess three control points that are located throughout a map – of which there are seven new additions including an atmospheric Egyptian lion pit and the decaying graffiti-scrawled backstreets of an inner city slum.

Taking a control point is simply a matter of touching and turning it the colour of your team, but as there are several to cover at the same time, you find yourself frantically dashing about, helping fallen comrades and defending the targets from vicious enemy onslaughts. Commands can be given to individual bots or the whole team: Defend (protect the bases), Hold This Position (stay where they are), Attack (go on the offensive) or Follow Me (cover you). The winner of the game is the team who has reached a certain target score, by holding onto all the control points for the most amount of time.

Ordering your virtual team-mates around is useful for the Domination games, but absolutely

essential in Capture The Flag (CTF) and Assault which make up the next unlockable ladders. In CTF, two teams – Red and Blue again – have a base with a fluttering flag to defend. Points are scored when one team nabs the opposition flag and returns it to their base without losing their own flag. Each of the nine unique levels has a different challenge, with CTF tournaments set inside a claustrophobic orbiting nuclear reactor, for example, or taking place on a huge alien world with precarious bridges straddling massive volcanic pits. Tactics and skill are needed if you are to succeed in scoring enough points to win the game, ordering bots to protect you when you have grabbed the enemy flag, or go on the offensive while you stay behind to defend the home base.

Your team of bot soldiers merrily keep you up to date on the ensuing battle, with their face appearing on the HUD accompanied by a radio message such as "I'm under heavy attack" or "I've got the flag." With the help of your digital hombres, you soon start to discover little tricks of the trade to make it easier to win, such as using a pair of Anti Grav boots for leaping effortlessly over castle walls, or taking a lofty sniper position for sneaky long-distance frags.

The team games in *Unreal Tournament* often create a genuine feeling of camaraderie, such as

Tournament victors are presented with all the stats from the game and a rather cool 3D third-person view of the final moment of glory.

CAPTURE THE FLAG

Can you complete OPS2's stylish challenge on the CTF level 'Lava Giant' without getting killed?



1. Grab Anti Grav boots, tell the bots to defend the base, then leave, but don't jump – you'll need those three Anti Grav leaps for later on.

2. Run towards the enemy's blue base, taking the far left path and the left tunnel.

3. Grab the Redeemer and continue your journey towards the blue base taking the path on the left.

4. After the tunnel, fire the Redeemer using secondary fire button, guide the missile into the lookout tower of the enemy stronghold.

5. Jump over the wall of the enemy castle using the Anti Grav boots, grab their blue flag and bound back over the wall.

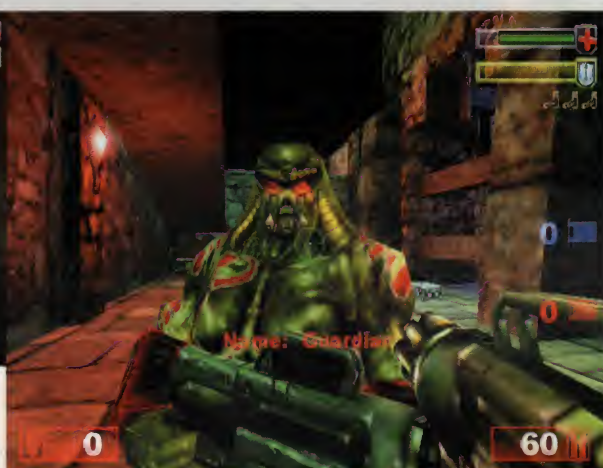
6. Order your red team bots to 'Follow Me' (so they'll cover you) and run home to your base as quick as possible. Job done.



Arturo's naughty nightclub is the scene of many an after-hours frag.



Using the zoom sight of *Unreal Tournament's* sniper rifle, you can indulge in enemy head-removal of the highest calibre.



"Don't fancy yours much..." Luckily this facially-challenged monstrosity is on your team.

when you're watching out for a flag-carrying chum, fighting off threats and making sure that they get the prized enemy banner safely back to base. However, the Assault ladder is an even more extreme war simulation, with teams divided into attackers and defenders. First, your team attacks, having to complete an objective within a certain time limit, such as storming an alien fortress to destroy a rare element. Once this is (or isn't) achieved, the roles are reversed and it becomes your turn to defend, with the team that completes the mission in the shortest time winning the game.

STUNNING SETTINGS

The design of some of these Assault levels is stunning – Ocean Floor, requires spectacular James Bond-style underwater battles, whereas High Speed has your plucky team battling aboard a 200mph speeding train. For *Saving Private Ryan* fans, there's the Overlord map, that recreates the

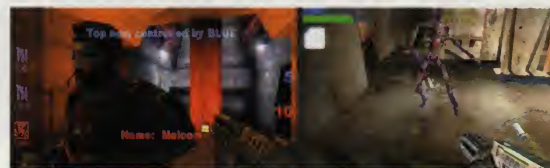
WWII Normandy landings, with bullets zinging past as you desperately attempt to invade a fortified beach stronghold packed with machine gun nests. Assault is fantastically atmospheric and the best of the additional deathmatch ladders you can play, creating the kind of tension and excitement that is quite rare in a single-player videogame experience.

The last UT ladder is Challenge. This throws you into a one-on-one fight to the death against the greatest warriors in the universe. Defeat these four tough opponents and you'll be crowned the Champion of *Unreal Tournament* – but be warned, they're as hard as a fired-up Mike Tyson, relentlessly hunting you down through the different levels until they've got you cornered and splattered your bloody remains all over the galaxy.

However many computer-controlled opponents you obliterate, there's nothing like pitting your survival skills against other humans. *Unreal Tournament* can be played with up to four people, [E]

UNREAL TOURNAMENT VS TIMESPLITTERS

Both FPSs for the PS2 are fabulous fraggers, but what game reduces the other to a bloody mess of entrails and discarded skin?



UNREAL TOURNAMENT	TIMESPLITTERS
Levels A total of 53 levels that spoil the gamer with an incredible range of styles and settings including Egyptian tombs and lava-filled asteroids. ★★★★★	A less impressive 18 maps that don't have the variety of UT. It does have a Mapmaker to create a multiplayer deathmatch levels. ★★☆☆☆
Guns to kill for? 12 meaty weapons, some dual fire modes. Fabulous Cruise missile stylings of the Redeemer and a sniper rifle for vicious head shots. ★★☆☆☆	Includes 23 powerful weapons with alternative fire modes and the opportunity to use two at once. Best weapon? Minigun X 2. ★★★★★
Ultra-violence Oh yes. Plenty of distressing screams, with slithers of bone and stray limbs slapping against walls. Yum. ★★★★★	Excellent death throes and comedy 'character blown into the air by explosion' moments, but not a drop of blood to be seen. Boo. ★☆☆☆
People you'd like to meet? Some 21 fearsome warriors including war machine robots and scary Skaarj aliens. ★★☆☆☆	A varied 64 characters including cyborgs, Chinese hoodlums, SWAT soldiers, cheerleaders, duckmen and Elvis impersonators. ★★★★★
Controls Completely definable, with a fantastic option to plug in a USB keyboard and mouse – top stuff. ★★★★★	Options to define Dual Shock 2 controls, but a distinct lack of compatibility with PC-style USB keyboard and mouse. ★☆☆☆
Single-player action Five game 'ladders' including your basic deathmatch, Capture the Flag, Domination, great AI and involving Assault war simulations. ★★☆☆☆	An addictive Story mode with simple objectives, silly challenges, and numerous deathmatch variations involving those essential bots. ★★☆☆☆
Frame rate Choppy with on-screen action, especially for multiplayer split-screen. Not what you'd expect from your next-generation PlayStation 2. ★	Smooth and silky. Hardly drops below 60fps even in multiplayer mode. ★★★★★
And the winner is... UNREAL TOURNAMENT 27	TIMESPLITTERS 28



Transporters zap you quickly and painlessly to a different area of the tournament arena.

REVIEW

UNREAL TOURNAMENT



FRIENDLY FIRE

Murdering your best mates can be fun.

There's nothing like gathering a few mates around a PS2 for a mad, split-screen deathmatch – and *Unreal Tournament* delivers an enjoyable, if patchy, multiplayer experience. With only seven deathmatch maps and four Capture the Flag levels, there isn't a great deal of variety, but the excellent 'Mutators' allow gamers to add silliness to the proceedings. *OPS2* highly recommends combining the Hyper Speed setting with the one shot, one kill insanity of Instagib for a ridiculously over the top competition with oodles of gore. *UT* also has options to link up to four PS2s via the I-Link port, to create a miniature Local Area Network (LAN). Unfortunately, the split-screen action is hampered by the game's stuttering frame rate, meaning *UT* multiplayer deathmatches can be strangely unsatisfying.



The Blue team regroup and go on the offensive, armed to the teeth with laser-spitting pulse blasters.

via a split-screen arrangement, or through the PS2's I-Link connection – providing you have the requisite number of Sony consoles, colour televisions, link cables and copies of the game. Unfortunately, the only multiplayer options are deathmatch and CTF games, each with just seven and four maps respectively. The levels are well constructed with just enough variety and there is plenty of fun to be had getting a bunch of mates gathered round a PS2 to decorate the walls of a futuristic battle arena with their discarded entrails. *UT* also includes a smart bonus option ported from the PC known as Mutators. These are parameters that players can mess with on multiplayer or practice sessions to create whole arenas with low gravity or produce a slow motion effect for fantastic John Woo-style battles.

The frame rate however, is a major problem in *UT*'s multiplayer games. As soon as there is any major action on-screen, the game slows right down, resulting in an extremely jerky appearance – it's rather like watching a film at an old cinema when the projector keeps breaking down.



Assault mode packs in the *Under Siege 2*-inspired thrills of storming a fast-moving armoured train. No Steven Seagal, though.

//It's like watching a film at an old cinema when the projector keeps breaking down//

Multiplayer first-person shooters rely on their speed to deliver funny and frenetic gory mayhem and without a fast frame rate, most of that adrenaline-boosting thrill is gone. Rival PS2 FPS *TimeSplitters* gives an infinitely smoother and faster multiplayer experience – the action is sometimes so slow in *UT*, it feels like a game of chess rather than a deathmatch. Also, the lack of a radar means that a two-player game taking place on a larger level, results in combatants wandering aimlessly and slooowly around in search of a frag. Both upping the in-game speed and, yes, being involved in a full-on fourway fragfest can mask this to a degree but at the end of the day? It's jerky.

Graphics are suitably polished for a next-gen game, with detailed rendering of the characters, colourful explosions and weapons fire that lights up the screen, spilling bullets and gore in all directions. *UT*'s level design too is simply breathtaking – there are so many wonderful locations including space stations, mining colonies with shimmering water and fast moving clouds moving across alien skies – all mightily impressive.



Ocean Floor requires your plucky soldiers to strap on scuba gear and destroy an underwater base.



Q&A



FRAG TALK

Cliff Bleszinski is Lead Designer at Epic Games. He told *OPS2* about some of the more technical elements of PS2 *Unreal Tournament*.

How did the team find porting UT to the PS2?

The PlayStation 2 system is tricky to learn at first, but once you have figured out its intricacies, PS2 is a very powerful gaming platform.

What do you think is the best gaming element of this new PS2 version?

I like the fact that the game plays well with the PS2 controller.

The violent 'Head Shots' appear to have been toned down for the PS2 version. Is this the case?

The Head Shots are, in fact, very much intact. *Unreal Tournament* has not been watered down for the PS2. In any way, I assure you.

You seem to have used a full-screen anti-aliasing technique for smoothing out textures. Did this reduce the frame rate at all significantly?

Not really. Our programmers managed to figure out a clever way to do it without a huge performance impact.

For the PlayStation 2 version of UT you've got rid of some PC levels (for example, the Morpheus multi-levelled city) and added new ones for the multiplayer (Canyon Fear). What is

your favourite PS2 level and why?

My favourite PS2 level is DM-Coagulate. Using the Flak Cannon in that level is an absolute blast – you just can't miss.

Did you feel that implementing a keyboard/mouse option was important for a console game?

Well, it was one of those features that every magazine guy asked us about. The gamers asked about it. Our publisher asked about it. We figured that if there was that much interest we'd better do it.

What was the idea behind implementing new characters in the Challenge ladder?

We wanted to add more of a 'boss' element to the PS2 version. On the PC we had the gamer only fighting Xan, and so for the PS2 we wanted to extend the excitement of an intense one-on-one battle.

Do you feel that FPS work better on PCs or games consoles?

It depends on the title. Some elements translate better to consoles, others work better on a PC. The key is to design your game for one platform and if you're porting it you need to upgrade and change the game enough so it works well on that new system.



Worse things happen at sea: The Koos Galleon level is awash with the blood of scurvy landlubbers.

Disappointingly, there is one other graphics feature, apart from the slowdown, that really shouldn't be there – the fuzzy appearance of the game. Epic Games has used the bludgeoning effect of full-screen anti-aliasing to soften the jagged polygon edges of graphics ('jaggies') which has given the game a, dare we say it, N64-style soft focus sheen.

Here's the rub: *Unreal Tournament* is an superb game and worth every penny if you want big weapons, bots with Intelligent AI, internal organs decorating walls, a collection of beautifully-designed levels, innovative deathmatch variations, keyboard/mouse input and no Jim Davidson. Multiplayer games are jolly too, but it's that poor frame rate that tarnishes *Unreal Tournament*. After playing a copy of UT on a two-year-old P266 PC with a rubbishy 3D card we found it still runs smoother – not what you want to hear if you're the owner of a shiny new PS2. First-person shooters rely heavily on their fast speed and fluid movement – a harsh lesson that *TimeSplitters* has learnt and despite everything, *Unreal Tournament* unfortunately has not. □ Jamie Sefton

The Shield Belt is an essential defensive gadget, covering your fleshy parts with a protective blue sheen.

UNREAL TOURNAMENT

Why we'd buy it:

- Huge number of well-designed levels
- Superb deathmatch variations, with gore
- Big weapons and keyboard/mouse option

Why we'd leave it:

- On-screen action gives a jerky frame rate...
- ...and this a pretty disappointing multiplayer game

Unreal Tournament is a hugely playable, brilliantly designed, ultraviolent 3D shoot-'em-up, despite needlessly having PS2 frame rate problems.

Graphics	Lush but spoilt by slowdown and 'fuzziness'	06
Sound	Energetic soundtrack with atmospheric effects	09
Gameplay	Massive fun with great deathmatch variations	08
Life span	Tons of levels and unlockable games	07

08

PlayStation 2 NERDICT



If you think that's a hot piece of summoning, wait until later in the game...

SUMMONER

A Summoner's power topples empires. And guess what? There's an empire that needs toppling...

Publisher: THQ
Developer: Volition
Price: £39.99 (TBC)
Players: 1
Out: March 2001
Web site:
www.summoner.com

Back story

The first of two PS2 games from Volition (the other being *Red Faction*), *Summoner* is a marked departure for the company used to developing for the PC market. Most notable for the *Descent* games, Volition was recently voted one of the 100 fastest growing companies in the US.



As the sun sets, big and fat in the winter's sky, a small village nestled between frosty hills lights its lanterns and downs its tools. All is quiet apart

from a tavern filled with song and the heady aroma of fresh food and ale. Suddenly, and without warning the village is attacked. But one boy fights back. Cursed with the mark of the Summoner since birth, Joseph, a young farm-hand, uses his powers to summon demons to fight for the village.

Unfortunately Joseph is a weak lad, and is thus unable to control his powers. As a result the summoned demons turn on the villagers and raze them to the ground. Joseph becomes an outcast and leaves never to return...

It's not long though before the hunt for the Summoner's head has begun on the command of an evil Emperor, and so has Joseph's desperate bid to fulfil his dark destiny. Travelling the four corners of the Earth, Joseph must recover four elemental summoning rings and bring the existing tyranny to an end.

RPGs have a problem. From *Final Fantasy* to *Zelda*, these cult games have all trodden a well-worn path in terms of game storyline – hell, a typical RPG's plot would barely cover the opening chapter of a Terry Pratchett novel. Tyrant captures artefact/princess. Anime peasant boy with ambiguous gender sets out to rescue artefact/princess with a motley band of

//It's grandiose and has been crafted with expert storytelling//

adventurers to help him along the way. Artefact/princess is saved. Sun sets, kisses all round, put Joypad down, go to pub, then flog game down the market the following weekend.

MUSTERING THE TROOPS

Summoner however, although still inextricably bound by certain RPG confines like plot, strives to stand out from the overburdened bag of similar titles on the market. For one, the characterisation is sublime. Joseph isn't a felt-wearing elfin rascal, he's a tortured soul, reluctant, hollow-faced and grizzled. Flece, the first member of his party doesn't join him out of a belief in his righteous cause, she's a thief who needs to use his strength to her own ends. Rosalind, training to become a priestess on the Island monastery of Iona is forced by her elders to leave and join the farmer boy in what she considers a suicide mission. And finally, Jekhar, a survivor of Joseph's ill-fated first summoning is ordered by the King of the Merdeva to help aid the mission. Warrior/magician/archer? No, a rag-tag band of misfits who have little skill (let alone enthusiasm) to undertake the mission but must do so nonetheless.



Flece and Joseph travel to Iona to ask Rosalind to join them.

Non-playable characters are abundant too and refreshingly each has something valid to say, feeding you snippets of information, opinions and trivia which may or may not relate to your quest. The little *Summoner* lacks in plot originality (after all, we're still fighting tyrants against impossible odds here) it makes for up with emotive, easy-to-relate-to leads. And this is a first too; the voice acting is second-to-none. Ever heard a beggar utter the line, "The blaggard plucked my eyes out and ground them to dust," with agonised pathos before? Well here's your chance.

So now we've established the strong, empathic characters and plot, what of gameplay? The word 'huge' springs to mind – as do 'sprawling' and

HISTORY OF THE HERO

Know yourself like you know your enemy.



Joseph (Party Leader)

Skill: Summoning

Best Item: Summoning rings. Of all the rings, a combination of Light and Fire together works most effectively.

Brief History: Banished by his village after summoning a demon, as an adult he is hunted for his gift. Destined to lead the world into a new era of peace.



Rosalind (Trainee Priestess)

Skill: Healer

Best Item: Anything magical to keep her safe as she has a distinct lack of armour available.

Brief History: Training on the island monastery of Iona she is forced to join Joseph's quest. She soon becomes vital to the mission though with her healing powers.

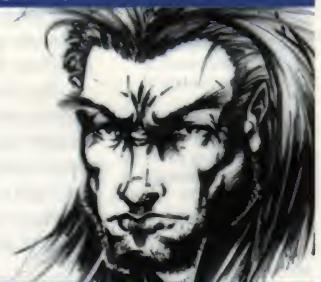


Flece (Professional Thief)

Skill: Picking locks

Best Item: Long bow. She's a deadly shot.

Brief History: From the streets of the Old City she has close links to the underworld. Little is known of her other than her loyalty to herself. All that changes though.



Jekhar (Soldier)

Skill: Strength

Best Item: Big, heavy weapons. Anything to cause a headache. His strength is without question so his weapons must reflect this.

Brief History: A survivor of Joseph's first summoning, he is forced to join his quest. He hates Joseph and is slow to trust him.



Just because they're big and ugly doesn't mean they wish you harm. Most golems are friendly.



Venture alone if you dare. Staying in the party is a hell of a lot safer though.



Once you're done with your summoned beast you must return it to hell before it turns on your group. Believe us, things can get nasty.

'Immersive'. It screams it from the mountain tops. Besides the main mission of saving the world, a task which is akin to backpacking up Everest in slippers, there are multiple sub-plots weaving and entwined throughout. Often these are little more than running errands, fetching books, helping peg-toothed, bandy-legged old washerwomen across the road or forging documents for shady shadow-dwelling folk from the 'cloak and dagger' school of thought. They are all worth investigating though, and are more than a cynical ploy to elongate the plot - that's beefy enough to stand on its own two legs. Rewards in the form of money, gems and the occasional item of mystical weaponry can all be obtained for favours, and while these are not integral to the game, they often mean tipping the balance of a battle.

Those familiar with the PSone's *Vagrant Story* will already be a dab-hand at the combat system. Although still turn-based, you can prevent enemies making retaliatory strikes by timing your blows to a rhythm. When a tiny chain icon flashes above your head you are required to time your hits to coincide with its appearance and form chain attacks. Theoretically you can bludgeon a monster to death before it takes the protective corks off its fangs. To further aid you in such skirmishes each of your party can act independently thanks to the players' ability to alter their AI. Set their attack patterns to 'mélée' and



Get Rosalind casting and there's no stopping your party. She's lethal with a sprig of thyme.

Joseph, our grizzled hero. He's hardly Cloud or Squall but he's a top character nonetheless.



BEWARE THE BACITE

How to kill the Bacite, the first monsters you will encounter.



Found in Lenele's sewers, the first enemy monsters you encounter can be some of the trickiest but they're worth tackling. Each Bacite tail is worth up to 250 gold pieces so the more you manage to lop off the better. With Fleece and Joseph the only playable characters at this point, set Joseph in a support role and attack the Bacite with Fleece. Her chain attacks come quicker, so despite being weaker you are less likely to get hit. Keep an eye open for different coloured Bacites, each has a different skill. The most important to kill first is the Bacite Shaman (orange/cream) as these cast spells. Kill these chaps first then take out the others and you should crawl out of the sewers in one piece.

they'll start on the most threatening acid-spitting fiend posing a threat. If you want them standing in the background casting healing spells as you desperately try to prevent a ghoul sticking a straw in your ear and sucking out your brains then they'll be more than happy. Wouldn't we all?

Although various options are available, perhaps the most useful is 'support'. Your compatriots will band around Joseph and assist him whilst he gets down to the things he was destined to do. Such as summoning. The summoning feature isn't available at the beginning of the game and it's a good chunk into the quest before you actually find your first summoning ring. Believe us, it's well worth the wait.

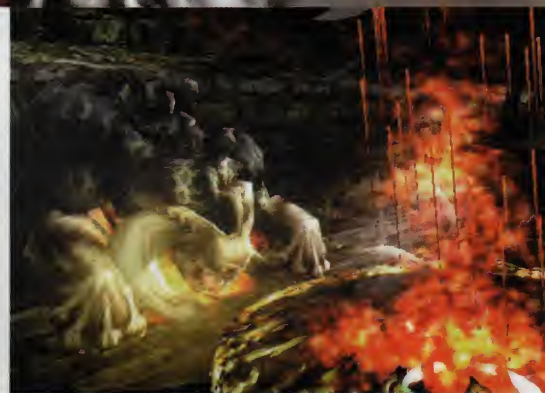
Once you summon a demon you then control it as you would a member of your party. These creatures are suitably impressive. Imagine the ground cracking open in a blaze of crimson and black light to reveal a demon of pure darkness wielding a huge rusting blade. Cackly pants we think. Or how about a blood-red Minotaur

//Pop-up is the worst offender, throwing up sizeable surprises//

holding aloft a scythe that would make even Death feel impotent. It gives a tangible sense of urgency to your quest. You need to find these beasts, you need to collect them – if only just to see what you could have fighting by your side. To blatantly borrow a mega-bucks phrase, you quite simply 'Gotta catch 'em all'.

A great deal of consideration has been given to the gameworld, and it oozes history. Just get stuck with the high priest for an hour and you'll have the full low-down on the Gods and heaven whether you wanted to or not. But a land lavished with such heritage and sense of past is conveyed better through the folklore and tales of yore than it is through the aesthetics and visual evidence.

Pop-up is perhaps the worst offender, often throwing up sizeable surprises such as bridges



The earth cracks open and all hell breaks loose. Get used to it, this is a very dangerous world.



Cast a healing spell followed by the light spell and you might make it out the labyrinth alive.

and buildings. In all fairness though, this is simply modified by altering the infinitely adjustable camera angles. In fact, you'll often find that in order to discover all the advice-spewing vagabonds you need an overhead view anyway, thus cutting out the 'Ta-daa!' style appearance of buildings. Character animation isn't quite up to par either. The bigger they get the more difficulty the PS2 has in animating them. Most noticeably when the Minotaur is summoned and is up to his knees in molten gloop fighting a lava-dwelling armadillo, an agonised crunching can almost be heard from your groaning PS2.

Summoner is able to cope valiantly with vast numbers of smaller foes though. Legions of undead and hordes of sewer-scuttling Bacites (see



Control the Minotaur and any foe can be beaten. Just look at the size of him next to Flece!

RPG ALTERNATIVES

Five other PS2 games to get your RPG fix from.



Orphen (Activision)

Scored only four out of ten in issue #01, it features dull gameplay and visuals more suited to a PSone game. Three separate stories do keep it interesting, but it isn't enough to stop gamers yearning for something more.



Dark Cloud (SCEE)

Eagerly-anticipated RPG that looks as good as it sounds. Not only do you have the chance to save your world, you're also given the opportunity to build it from scratch. Perhaps the most sought-after RPG after *Final Fantasy X*.



Eternal Ring (Ubi Soft)

Available within the month, *Eternal Ring* is a first-person RPG in which Cain Morgan travels to a mysterious island to do battle with dragons. Despite the *King's Field*-style presentation there could be very little to make this stand from the crowd.



Evergrace (Ubi Soft)

Darius and Sharline embark on separate missions that begin to intertwine. Switch between characters and guide them on their paths to destiny in this RPG many are reporting as rather mediocre. See our preview on page 36.



Ephemeral Fantasia (Konami)

An RPG in which you combat monsters and enemies using the power of Konami's Bermani Instruments. Ever beaten a beast into submission using the power of a flute? You will soon. Thank goodness it looks good – it sounds barking.



There's something in his eyes that says he means trouble.



Spells can be subtle as well as devastating.



The full party. Ready to save the world?

Beware The Bacite) aren't at all problematic, especially when kept at a distance. Bring the camera in close though and you'll see why. Detail is as minimal as possibly acceptable without looking like an advanced PSone game. There are angles and joints on characters that just shouldn't be there. Rounded and realistic they are not, pure polygon they are.

MULTILAYER GAME

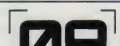
There is justification for *Summoner's* saggy bits. The game is so big and richly detailed in plot and mysticism, it hardly leaves room for elements such as whether the characters look pretty or not. In fact, you'll be so immersed in the game that after a while you'll fail to notice pop-up, gangly limbs and pointed faces at all. Just get down to the real business of finding those rings and freeing your world from the Emperor and you'll discover *Summoner* is leagues deep.

It doesn't just stick to RPG either; another wonderful distraction from its less-than-polished looks. At one point you enter a fiendish labyrinth, laced with traps so perplexing you'll spend hours trying not to trigger them and the virtually unstoppable golems they release. *Deathtrap Dungeon* is put to shame. *Metal Gear Solid* is also flagrantly 'borrowed' from. Try breaking into a castle with Flece and not only do you have screaming maids to avoid but some seriously disgruntled guards. These are only small additions to gameplay admittedly, but they are integral. They

keep the scenario pounding on, keep the story pushing forward further and further into dark, dangerous territory. And just try stopping now. You won't be able to.

PS2-owning RPG fans have been waiting for *Final Fantasy X* with an absurd fanaticism. We all know that such steady stock on the PS2 is certain to knock the competition into a cocked hat. Unfortunately, *Summoner*, no matter how great the sum of its parts, will be swept aside by *Final Fantasy X*. It's a fact of life, not a reflection on *Summoner* because what you have before you with Volition's game is a truly entertaining spectacle. Grandiose and crafted with expert storytelling, *Summoner* should be relished before the might of *Final Fantasy X* forces us to forget it. The best RPG on the PlayStation 2... so far. A fine, fine game. ☐ Ben Lawrence

SUMMONER

Why we'd buy it: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Gameplay so deep you could drown in it- Limitless inventories and spells- Beautifully scripted		Why we'd leave it: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Too ugly- Pop-up way too severe in some places	The best RPG for PS2 so far. A little too ugly for its own good but a veritable gem underneath.
Graphics	The weakest link. Goodbye	05	
Sound	Soaring, orchestral and awe-inspiring	09	
Gameplay	Varied but too slow for some	07	
Life span	Epic in every sense of the word	09	

PlayStation 2 VERDICT





Cannon fire can be so pretty – until you're on the receiving end.



The soldiers in lampshade helmets line up, to die for the cause.

KESSEN

War. Really, just what is it good for? Well, Japanese real-time strategy historical epics for one thing...

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: Koei
Players: 1
Out: Now
Web site: www.ea.com

Back story

Koei is the developer most famous for historical Far Eastern strategy games of the Chinese and Japanese variety. Along with many often unpronounceable PC titles including *Taikou Risshiden 3* it has also produced *Dynasty Warriors 2* for PlayStation 2. Oh, and *Kessen II* is already on the way...



Games can captivate you, push your emotions and trash preconceptions. Or at least the very best games can. Most just divert, momentarily, and then let you get back to whatever you didn't want to think about in the first place. Good games, though – really good games – can suck you in, chew you up and spit you out. They change what you know. They force you to think, react, use your instincts. They make your thoughts speed, your blood rush. They entertain. Real-time strategies like Koei's *Kessen* are traditionally low on this factor.

After Westwood's *Command & Conquer* popularised the real-time strategy genre five years ago, it and thousands of near-identical clones since have brought the unique brand of semi-pacey military chess into social acceptability. The genre's certainly intellectually involving, at least to those who find the idea of digital table top wargaming attractive, and there's no doubt that it can provoke an obsessional 'just one more go' attitude. But fun? Common wisdom says not. *SSX* is fun. An RTS? An RTS is rewarding...

Kessen would argue otherwise. Or if not argue, certainly charge you down and hack at your legs with a metre-long samurai sword, then encourage a thousand of its fanatical followers to do the same, all the time screaming 'Fun! Fun! Fun!' in a dubiously dubbed Eastern accent. It may or may not be right. Whatever, *Kessen* arrives in Britain on the back of massive success in Japan, and with a lot of work to do battling against people's

preconceptions about war games. It's a real-time strategy epic by Koei, and in keeping with its back catalogue it has a strong grounding in Japanese history. Actually, saying that *Kessen* is strongly grounded in Japanese history is a bit like saying *Tekken Tag* is strongly grounded in punching and kicking. *Kessen*'s historical grounding is so deep that it contains an in-game encyclopaedia allowing you to research details on all the main characters and battles in the epic real-life conflict.

If you're still trying to get a grip on *Kessen*'s personality, imagine it's an interactive lecture on military Japan, fuelled by past-altering drugs and considered violence. Interesting enough, but you'd be ill-advised to write a thesis on it. You see, despite the missions being based on the Tokugawa's rise to power at the end of the 16th Century, you're taking charge of the battle tactics and it's likely things won't always head in a historically accurate direction. The game also gives you a chance to play on the other side of the conflict as leader of the opposing Toyotomi family, and defeat Tokugawa, thus changing the course of history entirely.

Still, let's not get ahead of ourselves. Before you start creating time travel anomalies, you have to play the whole game through as Tokugawa and become the righteous ruler of all Japan, and this is where things start to get difficult to analyse. Even though this is Koei's most simplistic war game, it's still a war game, and the idea of actually playing through it might be something

//Simplistic pre-match preparation makes Kessen accessible//

most Western console gamers will find a chore. But let's stop our preconceptions, stop our cynicism and look at *Kessen* with some kind of child-like innocence. Let's examine the actual game which, aside from the hours of cinematic FMV, is split into two broad sections: the revamped pre-battle preparations and the real-time strategy battlefield element.

DIPLOMATIC DEALINGS

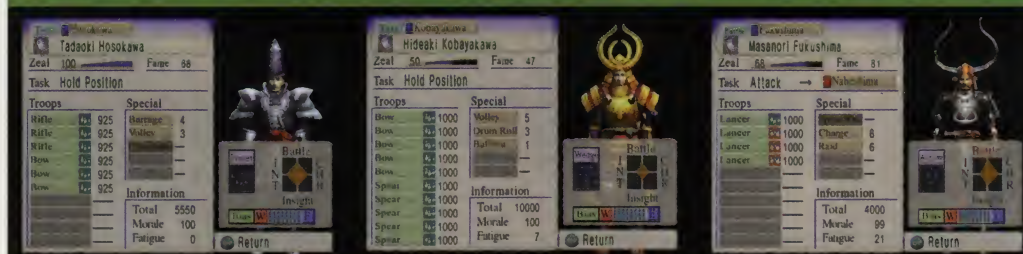
Fans of Koei's previous games might be dismayed to see much of the courteous diplomacy element has disappeared from its latest work, but there's little doubt the new simplistic pre-match preparation makes *Kessen* much more accessible to most gamers. Before the battle, you sit with two of your advisors, and instruct them as to the plans for the forthcoming conflict. The parallels with a football management game are obvious. The first step is to analyse the enemy officers, both in terms of their personality and the armies they'll each bring to the battlefield. After that, you're given the opportunity to persuade several of them to either defect to your side, or to refuse to fight entirely. Finally, you must select a team of officers according to who you feel will be strongest against the enemy. As well as being physically different, combat strengths and weaknesses vary between officers, as does their loyalty to your cause.

Once you're happy with your squad, you can alter their kit, define exactly what forces they each take onto the battlefield and then instruct them as to what tactics to favour. Each is also blessed with a set of special moves, which increase in power at the end of each successful battle. Just like anyone with any experience in the computer game strategy world will tell you, selecting a team with a variety of different skills is crucial for victory.

As you select your trusted combatants, it's wise to recall the slightly confusing FMV sequences that precede each battle. Aside from being beautifully rendered, they also hold clues as to which officers might be susceptible to bribery, or

BLIND FATE

Before going onto the battlefield, you've got to pick from a lotta lotta lovely men to aid you in your fury. Like *Blind Date*. Kind of.



1. Will it be number one, Hosokawa, whose cone-shaped head makes him a sure-fire hit with the ladies, and who promises to slay you dead tonight?

2. Or will it be our lovely number two, Kobayakawa? He's worth his weight in gold, but will his armour be enough to shield him from your affections?

3. Or number three, Fukushima, who says he's feeling horny, and swears blind he'll kill all who oppose the rightful reign of Tokugawa. Baby.



Kessen does its bit for equality in violence. Look, girls can carry sharp things too.

NOW THAT'S GOTTA HURT...

Making good use of special moves is crucial to campaign success. Here, the enemy do exactly that. Oh dear.



1. What's a Ballista? Whatever it is, it's about to get me. Oh well, I'm sure it'll be fine.



2. Oh dear. They've got big arrow-firing wheelbarrows. And there are loads of them. Rillight.



3. Everything's got a bit spiky for my cavalry. Still, some of them have made it through...



4. ...And some of them haven't. These unlucky types now have a belly full of pointy sticks.



Watching your side get slaughtered in close-up is rarely an uplifting task.



Still, victory is glorious, especially when the enemy are routed.

who might be particularly enraged to encounter old enemies on the battlefield. Even if you prefer making your tactics on the fly they're well worth watching, since Kessen's multi-character plot is so full of intrigue and betrayal that looking away for even a second causes mind-bending confusion.

Team and tactics selected? It's time to get schooled in the art of war.

Kessen provides a top-down view of the rolling hillside canvas, letting you select each of your squads with the shoulder buttons. Each group trundles about the hillside in real-time, though the game pauses while you find commands for them in the initially confusing menu system. As the commander of an entire army consisting of tens of thousands of soldiers, it would be impractical to instruct each of the grunts in turn. Instead, you issue orders to each of your previously selected officers, who then pass them onto their forces of thousands. Providing they haven't been bribed into defecting to the opposition, they'll follow your instructions to the letter, but the willingness with which they do so depends on exactly how good the orders you deliver are. Sometimes your troops will fight for your cause with passion, sometimes with sullen disbelief; ultimately it's all down to your own genius – or incompetence.

Each order is then accompanied by a brief cut-scene animation showing how it's received

by the respective officer and his forces. Special moves will also trigger their own dramatic illustrative sequences, showing one side being cut down under the attacks of the other. They're gorgeous, and painfully destructive (though curiously, blood is never spilled – enemies tend to collapse with shame rather than through missing limbs) but since the attacks lose much of their impact on repeated viewing, the ability to bypass them is a crucial inclusion. Once you're issuing quick-fire orders and skipping the



A VIEW TO A KILL

Four different scale views allow you to suss out the flow of action on the battlefield.



1. Up close it's difficult to work out exactly how the overall situation's going, but at least you can see how effective certain types of troops can be.



2. In the individual battle view, an overall feel of each skirmish can be taken in separately. Oh look, I'm about to get routed. 'N'cellent...



3. Japanese hillside views allow positioning of troops, and allows you to see how well individual battles fare as the size of each troop diminishes.



4. Finally, the map is for the pure tactician: Blue = Good, Red = Bad. At least on the first run through of the game...



Enemies are slaughtered with the triple barrage.

glorious animations, the game gets boiled down to its essence: electronic dice-rolling and pure tactical warfare.

KEEPIN' IT REAL-TIME

In the overview of the battlefield where you'll spend the bulk of your time, your armies are neatly represented as fuzzy clumps of men that decrease in size as your forces are relentlessly mown down by the opposition. This visualisation means it's easy to glance and see where you're destroying and where you're being destroyed, and are able to alter tactics appropriately. It also means you'll feel much more empathy with your forces, especially when one of your favourite officer's armies absolutely disintegrates under enemy fire. Be warned that things can get intensely personal; all real-time strategy games are involving on some level, but if you find yourself sucked into Kessen's take on the genre, it's probable that you won't escape until the very end of your campaign.

For those wishing to keep things slightly less visual, a purely strategy-based map view is also available, as is the ability to get close up to each man in every battle and see exactly what you're doing right, or (as is more often the case) what's going wrong. Make the correct decisions and you'll win, rout the enemy and be rewarded with more confusion via the FMV plot twisting. Lose, and you'll have to reload and retry – and you will, because each of Kessen's battlegrounds offers



Battle plans, the OPS2 way. Step One: Charge! Step Two: Watch enemy cannons fire. Step Three: Die. Aah.



near infinite strategic possibilities. Playing through each scenario for the perfect victory is unconsciously addictive. Although to some it'll be a calculated, intensely aggressive oriental dream, and to others it'll be a prolonged, tedious, near-comatose nightmare. So it's worth considering whether what Kessen has to offer – namely its epic strategy and the glorious sense of achievement that success in it brings – fits your definition of entertainment.

While Kessen may or may not be considered fun, it's definitely a work of art. It's also the first game on PS2 to genuinely amaze in terms of scope and scale, and it's clearly a labour of love on the part of its creators. Kessen, however, is not for everyone. And maybe that's its only flaw, as the majority of adrenaline junkies will absolutely hate it, and those expecting anything like the high impact combat of *Dynasty Warriors 2* will be bitterly disappointed. But for those prepared to spend hours plotting battle plans and a lot longer crying as their best laid plans fall to pieces, Kessen will absorb. It just won't blow apart any preconceptions, that's all. ☐ Ste Curran



A drum call is one way of improving unit morale, necessary to pull off spectacular special moves.

KESSEN

Why we'd buy it:	- An all-consuming work of true beauty	Why we'd leave it:	- Real-time strategies tend to bore	It won't appeal to everyone, but those who do like it will soon become obsessives.
	- Simple but offering near-infinite possibilities		- If you're after quick fix fun and who isn't?	
Graphics	An art of war masterpiece	08	07	
Sound	Awkward dubbing, but atmospheric effects	07		
Gameplay	Brilliant, for those so inclined	07		
Life span	So many possibilities for replay	08		

PlayStation 2 VERDICT

//Kessen genuinely amazes in terms of scope and scale//

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You're in the sky and you're surfing – and that's about as clever as this one gets...

SKY SURFER

'Tis a 'crazy' extreme sports sim that gives you the pleasure of surfing on the crest of a cloud.



The balloon bursting mini-game should not be more fun than the naff main event.



Publisher: Virgin Interactive
Developer: Idea Factory
Price: £39.99
Players: 1
Out: Now
Web site: www.vie.co.uk

Back story

Developer Sunsoft's pedigree is somewhat unremarkable in the UK. Enjoying little success on PSone with *Eternal Eyes*, a passable RPG, and *Blaster Master: Blasting Again*, a poor and extremely bad-looking remake of an Eighties hit. One other offering of note is *Monkey Hero* (published by Take 2), a tie-in (kind of) with the cult Seventies TV show, *Monkey*.



The lesser-known sport of sky surfing involves throwing yourself out of a plane with your feet attached to an elaborate plank of wood. It's

snowboarding for people who like heights but don't like snow. The idea is to do as many 'gnarly' (ahem) tricks as possible before finally pulling the ripcord and parachuting to safety. It sounds exhilarating. So it's therefore unfortunate that *Sky Surfer* itself is an insultingly one-dimensional affair that does nothing at all to compensate you for the boring tasks it requires you to perform.

The developer of *Sky Surfer*, Idea Factory, has done little to make falling out of plane interesting. The main free-fall section of the Diving mode is accompanied by a dubious gliding-on-a-parachute section in which you have to hit checkpoints, signified by mammoth floating balloons. The free fall tricks section requires you to consult a three-dimensional compass, which helps keep your character upright before responding to commands on-screen to press a button combo and pull off your tricks, of which there are only 13.

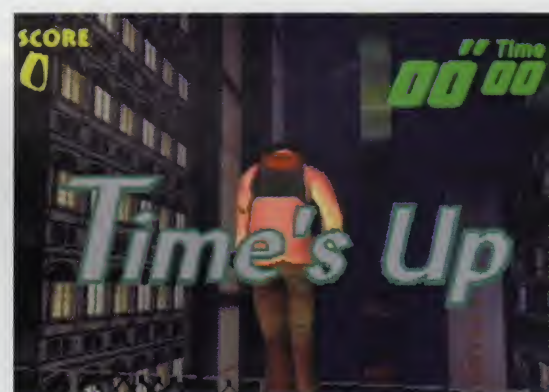
In a feeble attempt to cultivate a semblance of choice and depth, Idea Factory has included a paltry choice of three playable characters. Sadly, when you do finally achieve success you don't unlock any extra modes or added gameplay features whatsoever. Fear not, however, there is a range of radical boards – well six anyway – to choose from. That's a shockingly half-arsed concession to the demands of the modern-day gamer. This game has less depth than almost any

other sports game that appeared on the PSone. And that's simply not good enough.

SKY SUFFER

To begin with, the main Diving mode is virtually unplayable. The first segment of the jump hardly shows off the three locations, which equate to sky, cloudy sky and night sky and you'll actually spend most of your time with your eyes glued to the 3D model that shows where you are in relation to the ground. This means you're more preoccupied with adjusting your position than being focused on the repetitive strings of manoeuvres which flash up on screen that you need to copy to rack up the points. In the Gliding second section of your fall it's necessary to eject a parachute to lessen teeth breakage on impact. This is reminiscent of the end of a level in *Cool Boarders 4* on PSone where you had to glide toward a target on the ground. But that was after completing a decent downhill snowboarding run, and *Sky Surfer* isn't anywhere near as much fun.

The control system is extremely clumsy, though somewhat realistic, as you drift towards the floor in a controlled collapse. Hit the target, cue the end sequence and, erm, try the harder levels. Not exactly satisfying is it? If the first level, Rlo, is

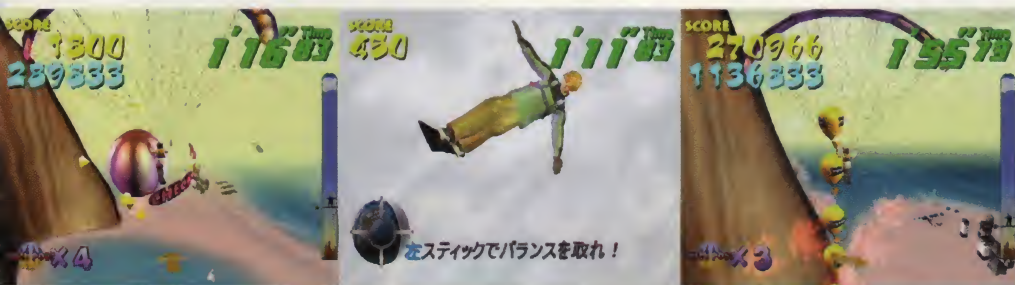


Tragedy strikes as you fail to burst some more balloons. Where's that off switch again?



A rare photograph of the only fan this game will ever boast.

//This game has less depth than any sports game on the PSone//



When you've managed to safely negotiate the free-fall section you'll pop a string of gargantuan balloons. Great.

GOING DOWN

There are 13 (count 'em) moves for you to master on your descent. Here's our top six...

1. Scorpion
⊙, ⊙, ⊙ Classic pose – tail up, hands out.

2. Opening Touring Car
⊙, ⊙, ⊙ The campest move ever.

3. Bending Reed
⊙, ⊙, ⊙ Perfect if you've caked your pants.

4. Propeller
⊙, ⊙, ⊙ The old Superman thing. Boss.

5. Free Fall
⊙, ⊙, ⊙ Comedy stiff-upside-down move.

6. Snow Ball
⊙, ⊙, ⊙ Looks quite impressive. Isn't really.



Choice is limited as you select from a rack of just six boards. You can't even unlock new ones.



It's at this point that you're tempted to leave that parachute clamped to your character's back so he plunges to the floor and certain death.

simple and irritatingly bland, Scotland (medium) represents a huge leap in difficulty. It's actually extra tricky to control your surfer with blustery and unforgiving conditions meaning marginal errors in your position result in death. The final level is the ultra-tricky Tokyo run, which should only be attempted by analogue experts. Sooner or later you'll begin wishing you were high up in the sky – not to jump out of it yourself but to throw the game out the hatch. Though knowing *Sky Surfer*, it would probably hit a thermal and fly back into your face, slicing a chunk off your face.

DEEPLY SHALLOW

The Practice mode is more satisfying than the main game, because it's based on a simple premise and gives you the feeling you're actually improving. In this level you are suspended in midair by a huge fan that recreates a thermal effect. The left analogue stick alters the direction in which you travel and the right stick adjusts your elevation as you must burst balloons set at various heights. As you advance, the number of balloons increases as they become more spread out.

The trouble is it doesn't take long to master. You simply have to rise up high and carefully work your way down to capitalise on the momentum and gravity to move faster on the horizontal plain. This mode has three locations, which are broadly similar to those in the main mode: a seaside setting accompanied by steel drumming, a winter/alpine setting and a big city rooftop location set at night.



Although the locations themselves are relatively varied – and let's face it there are only three – you can only move around within a narrow stream of air, which means there is no chance to explore your surroundings. The Practice mode ends up playing like a straightforward puzzle game and is the only redeeming feature of *Sky Surfer*.

The game would benefit greatly from a look command, although your cause is helped by an indicating arrow which appears as you get into the harder levels. Furthermore the lack of a career mode means there's no way you can pick a player, edit their looks and stats or improve their repertoire of moves. Oh, and there's no two-player mode. Can I go now? ☐ Lee Hall

THREE'S COMPANY

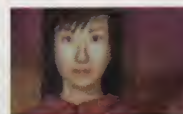
And what about that range of characters?



1. Harvey Hamilton
Skinny and weak.
Good for easy diving.



2. Ryo Kazami
Less skinny and tougher.
Good for hard diving.



3. Mai Natsume
Like a feather.
Good for Practice mode.

SKY SURFER

Why we'd buy it:

- As an ironic gesture
- To prop up the table when you run out of beermats

Why we'd leave it:

- No progression mode
- Unvaried gameplay
- Not much fun to play
- Tragically short life span

Sky Surfer is barely a game at all. Average graphics are buried under unvaried settings. The utter lack of depth is astonishing bearing in mind PS2's capabilities.

Graphics	Fine, but then sky is sky. Not much detail	05
Sound	Decidedly 'pop'. A few decent effects	04
Gameplay	Repetitive and boring	02
Life span	You'll have some fun with the Practice mode	02

03

PlayStation 2 VERDICT



ARMORED CORE 2

It's mech your mind up time – are customizable mechanoids where the future's at?

Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: From Software
Price: £39.99
Players: 1-2
Out: 16 Feb
Web site: www.ubisoft.co.uk

Back story

Technically the sequel to the PSone original, the series has proved so successful in Japan that two spin-off PSone titles were squeezed out. This game emerged shortly after the PS2 was launched in Japan, but a tug-of-war over the publishing rights has sadly delayed its Western release somewhat.

Videogames are such pessimistic things when it comes to the future of our good planet. In games the state of our globe, depicted a few years down the line, is never of picturesque beauty, only total and utter devastation. *Armored Core 2* paints such a depressing scene. With earth all but desecrated at the hands of multi-billion-dollar corporations, man has colonised Mars in a bid to wipe the slate clean, but the influx of settlers poses a threat to law order on the Red Planet – and that's where you come in.

Like its PSone predecessor, *Armored Core 2* is a mission-based shoot-'em-up featuring chunky, tooled-up and fully-customizable mechanoids. The game starts with a training mission, whereby your aim is to pick-off a small amount of enemy drones. Success in this most straightforward of tasks is rewarded by you being embraced into the bosom of the mech community and earning 'Raven' status. Being a Raven essentially means that you are one of the law enforcers of Mars and

can now undertake whatever important missions crop up along the way.

After your initiation, the main hub of the game becomes apparent in the form of an options screen that looks not unlike the old *Blockbusters* board. From here, you can peruse the available missions, check email, buy new parts for your mech in a shop and attach them in the garage. Another available option is the Arena mode. Starting out at number 50 out of 50, your aim is to battle your way up to the top spot by defeating a succession of other, more deadly mechs. This arena battle sub-game gets more engaging as you rebuild your mech to house continent-crushing firepower. Of course, you'll probably need to remortgage your house to afford the serious carnage-inducing tools, but it's something to play around with in-between missions.

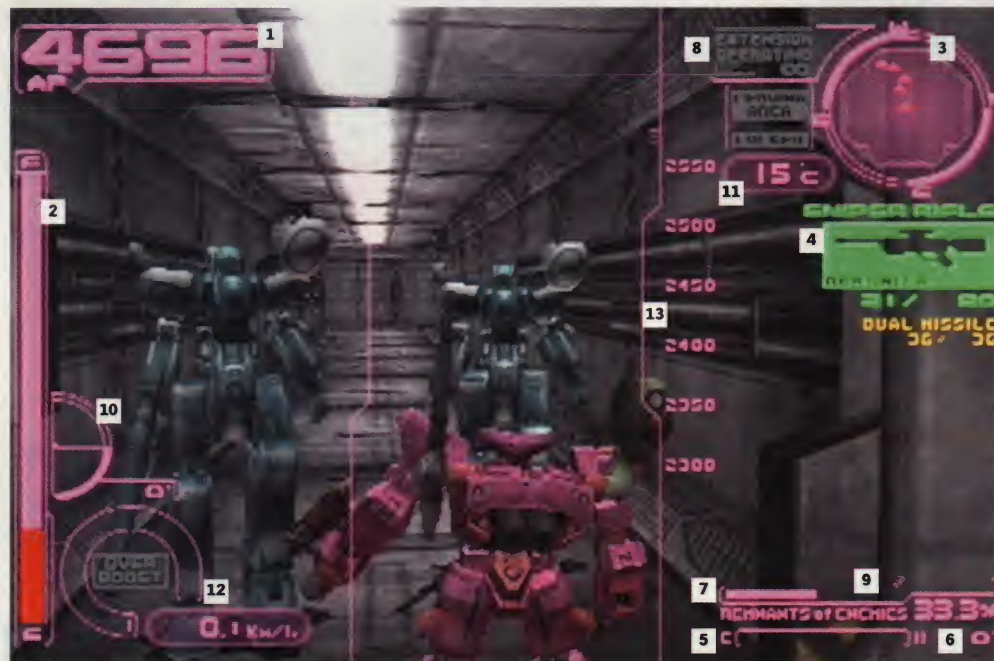
MECH-O-MIGHTY

It is the mission element that provides the brunt of the entertainment here, although it takes a

//Success is rewarded by you being embraced in the bosom of the mech community//

while to get into it. Starting out with only sub-standard weaponry, the game doesn't immediately grab you by the hydraulics as the gameplay involves little more than walking clumsily around targeting enemy droids and pressing the 'fire' button. *Armored Core 2* is all about modification, though, and success in the missions brings financial reward which can then be converted into new parts for your machine.

Almost every aspect can be modified, from the head down to the legs, and tasty firepower should be first on your shopping list to eradicate any boredom that may set in during the early stages. Take it from us, spraying something with eight missiles is a damn sight more satisfying than



'WHERE ARE THE WIPERS?'

The amount of on-screen displays that you can toggle-on in *AC2* gives a feeling of piloting a futuristic machine. Let us explain what each gauge represents:

- 1. Energy**
For some reason, your energy is shown as 9999. Whenever you are hit, it will deplete from this figure.
- 2. Booster**
This is the energy for your jetpack. This is handy for making a quick getaway or reaching very high places.
- 3. Radar**
Shows any enemy crafts that are posing any immediate danger. Keep an eye on this at all times.
- 4. Weapon**
Shows which weapon you currently have enabled.
- 5. Enemy weapon**
Just in case you want to know what the enemy is blasting you with, perhaps before going out and buying some of your own.
- 6. Enemy heat**
Want to make the enemy hot and bothered? This measurement will show how close to boiling point your opponent is.
- 7. Enemy energy**
Tells you exactly how much punishment they will take before disintegrating.
- 8. Enemy data**
If you want to know which type of craft is attacking you, this gauge has all the essential information.
- 9. Remnants energy**
This will tell you how many enemies are left to destroy.
- 10. Angle elevation**
You can adjust your sights up or down, this lets you know how far you are tilted.
- 11. Outer heat**
If your mech gets too hot, it is likely to shut down for a moment, leaving you open and vulnerable.
- 12. Speedometer**
This lets you know how fast your machine is currently travelling. Handy.
- 13. Altimeter**
Displays your height. Handy when using your booster or when tackling enemies on different levels.

HEAD-ACHE? WHY NOT CHANGE IT?

It's possible to modify every part of your mech.

Income and Expense report

Income	Reward	0
	Special addition	0
Expense	Ammunition	-7590
	AC repair	-18267
	Special deduction	0
	Balance	-25857
	Total credits	9744 Cr

1. Earn cash through missions to be able to afford the add-ons.



2. Then you can visit the shop and browse through the various components.



3. Now go to the garage and fit them to your mech robot.



4. If you want to try them out, go to the special testing area.

6330

Everything in the game can be modified to suit your tastes. From the colour of your mech to the digital display, it's all subject to change.



petting it with a single shot at a time. As soon as you break this monotony by affording to splash out on some serious weaponry, the game gets much better.

Aside from the components, your mech can undergo a series of cosmetic changes to suit your tastes. The colour scheme, from the mech itself to the heads-up display, can be tampered with and you can also hunt for secret parts that can be bolted on in the garage for dramatic results. However, the garage itself, in which you carry out all your modification, could do with being somewhat simpler. Even when you have all your new parts in the bag, fitting them is a tedious case of trial and error. Thankfully, there is a special test zone in place where you can try out all your new toys in a standard arena against two armed crafts. We strongly advise you do this each time you attach a part because you won't lose cash for sustaining any damage here... unlike in the actual missions.

Once you start the missions you will notice that the playing areas are way too confined which can lead to a mission ending abruptly when you venture outside the mission zone. A read-out will tell you if you are getting dangerously close to the boundaries, but when you are happily blasting away at the enemy you scarcely notice this and will be charged hefty sums for failing to complete the task at hand.

The appearance of AC2 is a very mixed bag indeed. The mechs themselves are highly detailed with a crisp shine and boast hundreds of moving parts, but the backgrounds leave a lot to be

desired. Sure, some playing areas feature neat-looking trains whizzing past plenty of detailed skyscrapers, but the brunt of the action is set outside on the barren plains of Mars and the only eye-candy to behold is just endless sand dunes. The sound is also unimaginative, being just standard blasting fare, while the tunes pale into insignificance behind all the explosions.

Armored Core 2 also features a two-player Deathmatch mode. But unless both players have played the game to some extent first and have built themselves up hefty mechs, then the standard machines are devoid of any decent toys to make the matches interesting. A better idea would have perhaps been to include a pot of cash for both players to dip into, then spend a few minutes modifying their mechs, before coming out into the arena with all guns blazing – instead of just the one...

There's no denying that AC2 contains a great deal of value for shoot-'em-up fans, in the sense that the amount you can tamper with your machine seemingly holds no bounds (especially as new parts are introduced all the time) and the sense of piloting your beast and fathoming the controls and dials is initially intriguing. But the missions fail to get the blood pumping and before too long you'll get bored of providing covering fire for allies or defending bases. Persevering with the game will undoubtedly hold many rewards, but we can't help but feel that if the developer had spent more time on the mission structure as it has on the bodyparts, then *Armored Core 2* could have been so much better. □ Ryan Butt



If you like your pyrotechnics, then *Armored Core 2* is an explosion-a-minute. Aside from guns and missiles, you can use a light sabre when in close.



United they stand. You are joined by other Raven mechs by way of support during some of the trickier missions. They don't last long though...

ARMORED CORE 2

Why we'd buy it:

- Endless scope for mech modification
- Provides a great spacey-feel
- Great weaponry

Why we'd leave it:

- Repetitive missions
- Unremarkable visuals
- Overly confusing in places

Definitely one for mech-heads that like tampering with the intricacies of their craft. They will drool over the amount of customizable body parts on offer.

Graphics	Nice mechs, but the backgrounds let it down	07
Sound	Standard bangs and booms, forgettable tunes	06
Gameplay	Gets better the more you play it	07
Life span	Plenty of replay value, but infuriating in places	07

07

PlayStation 2 VERDICT

REVIEW

DONALD DUCK: QUACK ATTACK



Frankenstein's monster represents the no-brained minority who are sure to flock to the game's cutesy visuals.

DONALD DUCK: QUACK ATTACK

Trouserless cartoon codger in fowl play platform scandal!



Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: Disney Interactive
Price: £39.99
Players: 1
Out: Now
Web site: www.ubisoft.com

Back story

Not only has Disney's favourite duck been starring in cartoons for 60 years, since the early Eighties, Donald has appeared in games on the Master System, MegaDrive, Game Gear, SNES, and Game Boy.



If this had been classified as a 'retro gaming experience', perhaps things would have turned out differently. Perhaps the content of this review would have been more lenient, but as it stands, *Quack Attack* deserves to be covered in plum sauce and strung up in a Chinese restaurant window. This offensive piece of gaming is nothing more than a platformer in the most primary sense. You run, you jump, you collect stuff – and that's it. It's coated with lush visuals, cool animation and a DVD-streamed intro, but *Quack Attack's* gameplay has been dredged up from a decade ago.

Charged with rescuing girlfriend Daisy Duck from the clutches of evil magician Merlock, our meteorological mallard must recover weather vanes from each tedium-filled level in his valiant rescue attempt. How this is supposed to actually aid Daisy remains a mystery.

Aesthetically, it doesn't just borrow from *Crash Bandicoot* as much as shamelessly rip it off. Donald and his surroundings are rendered in 3D, but he's always stuck on a single path, unable to explore beyond the boundaries of the screen. These limitations may have been acceptable on the old 32 bit PSone five years ago, when the hardware was still finding its feet,

but not in these Emotion Engine-powered times; even screenshots of the next gen *Crash* show everyone's favourite bandicoot has progressed beyond such linear trappings.

Sure, there is a measure of variety. But not much. After running 'into' the screen for one level, Donald then lethargically shifts his feathery butt to a different perspective, running from (wait for it) left to right. Donald, arguably the House of Mouse's most likeable critter, has just two moves at his disposal: jump and kick. Strangely, for his species, he can't even duck. Oh, and swim too – he doesn't seem to be too good at that either.

DUCK DOWN

Each of the four worlds follows this same, tedious pattern – the fact that programmers still insist on resorting to basic designs when there is scope for so much more is annoying. The game falls into the category of being too tricky for the bairns, yet too basic for the more seasoned gamer. Whether you're in the city of Duckburg, with its pneumatic drill-wielding workmen or a creepy castle filled with sonic-spitting bats, the gameplay's exactly the same: either dodge or attack the onslaught until the end of the level painfully creeps towards you. No reward. No fun.



Daisy Duck: girlfriend, TV news hack and witless patsy. Hang on, it's just Donald in drag.



This game may look 3D, but it's still stuck in two dimensions.

WHO'S THE BOSS?

Quack Attack's single redeeming feature is its boss battles, which – unlike the rest of the game – are blessed with some originality.



1. This lardy-arsed bird ain't Tweety Pie. He'll squash Donald unless you knock off his helmet and bash his head off.



2. The trick here is to lead the wrecking ball towards the crane, knocking one of the three bulldog bozos to earth.



3. Magica the Witch is intent on turning poor Donald into a Chinese meal. Her skeleton army can be used as a weapon.





"Ha ha ha! I, the evil Merlock, shall make a game so pitifully rank that its stench will be smelled the world over!"



OH SO SPECIAL

To spice things up a tad (but not a lot) there are special moves to pull off in order to grant the Duck ten seconds of invulnerability.



1. Collect enough of these gold sprocket tokens quickly in every level to spell out the word SPECIAL.



2. Finish the level and Donald's cloyingly cute nephews explain the button bashes needed to activate the move.



3. During the game, bounce on three enemies, hit **□** and quickly enter the code to get... a brief animated cut-scene.



4. The cut-scenes change with each sequence, but the result is always the same: a short-lived shield. Um, huh?

//It's doubtful that you'll want to visit Duckburg ever again//

To be fair, *Quack Attack* is obviously aimed at the very young PS2 audience, but how many PS2 owners are lusting after such schmaltz, when the likes of *Tekken* and *TimeSplitters* are on offer? If *Quack Attack* does find its intended audience, and a tot does pick it up, they'll soon be putting Donald down to play *Pokémon* instead, when they come up against the Everest-like learning curve that kicks in way too early for comfort. With no option to look around his environments, Donald just has to jump and hope for the best – and hope is a dangerous thing. More often than not, he invariably becomes an ex-duck.

In an attempt to liven up the leaden proceedings, Donald's trio of nephews, Huey, Duey and Louie, offer special moves for collecting tokens throughout the levels, in a *PaRappa*-like sequence of rapid button bashing. Despite each series of button combinations triggering a different animation (Donald pole-vaulting, ring-swinging, kicking a football and so on) the result is always

temporary invincibility, which seems a somewhat pointless prize.

Quack Attack's one redeeming feature is the inventive boss battles. At the end of world one, Donald must avoid eggs farted at him by an overweight, irate bird. Another level sees the plucky hero dodging a wrecking ball thrown by his dogged assailants. While these attacks are creative, the action is over far too quickly. A patient gamer will have all 24 levels licked in an afternoon, mainly due to an abundance of extra lives – no doubt thrown in to alleviate the frustrating difficulty. The only longevity comes from replaying the levels to collect any items you missed, or fulfilling a challenge to complete as many special moves as possible in a set time. But after getting to the end by sheer blind luck the first time, it's doubtful that you'll want to visit Duckburg ever again.

Quack Attack is a wasted opportunity. Where are the power-ups? Why can't we play as other characters, like Huey, Duey and Louie? Why are the special moves so useless? And who ever heard of a duck drowning? PlayStation 2 may be in its infancy, but its games don't have to be infantile. *Quack Attack*? Excuse the pun but it's more like Cack Attack. **Richard Moulton**

DONALD DUCK: QUACK ATTACK

Why we'd buy it
– Impressive DVD intro
– Unique boss battles

Why we'd leave it
– Tedious gameplay
– Frustrating difficulty
– Lacks longevity
– Outdated concept

Stone-age gameplay and limited graphics combine to create a very poor PS2 game. A complete waste of your swanky 128 bit super console.

Graphics	Looks like a PSone game	05
Sound	Repetitive music, but nice voices	06
Gameplay	Unoriginal, boring and simplistic	02
Life span	Only 24 [short] levels to contend with	03

04

PlayStation 2 VERDICT

NOW GIVE THAT MAN A HAND...

Each world's frustrating final level sees Donald fleeing 'out of the screen' from a ghostly gloved hand. A concept that never worked in the past, and never will.



1. In this CGI cut-scene, Merlock unleashes his secret weapon. A gun might be more effective.



2. The four-fingered fiend starts off at a distance but soon catches up. Donald can barely waddle.



3. Ouch! Getting grabbed costs Donald energy and time. Which he can barely afford.



4. Ho-hum. This chasing lark isn't too hard. Er, where did that chasm appear from? Waugh! Dead again.





Leaps of faith occur every ten seconds.



Bluth's artwork is pasty in this DVD port.



The Infanta Ray turns Ace into Dexter.



These beautifully rendered landscapes did shift at a good rate on LaserDisc, but the DVD skips.

SPACE ACE

Last issue *Dragon's Lair* on the PS2 shocked us with its ineptitude. Can *Space Ace* do the same? Yes.

Publisher: Digital Leisure
Developer: Cinematronics
Price: £24.99
Players: 1
Out: Now
Web site: www.digitalleisure.com

Back story

Don Bluth Studios, RDI Video Systems and Cinematronics teamed up to form Maglcom and released *Space Ace* for the arcades in October 1983. The only real novelty over their popular *Dragon's Lair* title was the addition of three difficulty settings: Space Cadet, Space Captain and Space Ace. The company decided to cut costs by providing the voice acting themselves. Bluth himself gives Borf his maniacal intonation.



Space Ace needs to be cherished. The game that was the spiritual successor to *Dragon's Lair* should be taken from its LaserDisc format, converted to DVD and sent to every developer the world over. It has a vital function to serve, and Digital Leisure has generously begun its mission to provide every game designer with the blueprint of all that is bad in a videogame. Alas, this would be the dream. The reality is that *Space Ace* is being released to be bought by the general public.

Don Bluth (animator) and Rick Dyer (designer) created *Space Ace* too soon after *Dragon's Lair*, and it shows. The animation and wonderfully drawn and coloured environments were impressive back in 1983, but the game showed a distinct lack of imagination. The 'explore the castle and rescue the damsel in distress' story line returns, only this time it is set in the future. A space station replaces the castle, and the winsome girl is much the same, with just a name change. The evil in the game is provided by commander Borf, who is intent on enslaving the earth. It's all very tired stuff. The only really novel feature is the Infanta Ray – Borf's weapon, that transforms Ace into a child. Although this provides some of the more comic moments in the game, it fails to lift.

But it is the gameplay which is everything, and by today's standards *Space Ace* is pathetic. The ridiculously basic control mechanism returns. For those who never got the chance to play a LaserDisc game in the local arcade centre, here is a quick recap of the controls: up, left, down, right and fire. Yet these commands can only be entered at key moments. The rest of the 'game' consists of watching an animated cartoon. And if you are still



It may look exciting but don't be deceived.

considering buying it, please note that on this DVD version the controls are far from responsive. Instant death will often be a product of the erratic input sensitivity, rather than your poor gaming skills.

Space Ace would be an atrocious gaming experience even if it had been converted expertly, but the grainy textures, disc skipping and poor colour saturation all contribute towards making a bad game even worse. If there is anyone still tempted to relive their LaserDisc playing youth then just remember that nostalgia can be cruel. Please don't give in to it; keep those fond memories alive. □ **Mark Walbank**

SPACE ACE

Why we'd buy it:
– DVD includes interesting footage on creators
– That's it

Why we'd leave it:
– Terrible gameplay
– Poor conversion
– Likely to cause indigestion

Experts in the art of torture could not have found a better way to sap your will to live.

Graphics	Animation is spoiled by poor picture quality	02
Sound	Very basic laser blasts and voice acting	02
Gameplay	Like dodging someone in the street	01
Life span	Insects have been known to live longer	01

01

PlayStation 2 VERDICT

RETRO NO FUN

A typically lame *Space Ace* action sequence.



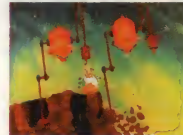
1. Puberty happens in an instant when Dexter energises into Ace.



2. When your gun flashes, press the fire button to shoot robots.



3. It's just a step to the left – but not as much fun as the Time Warp.



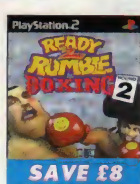
4. Then it's a step to the right – if you are still awake at this point.

//The only novel feature is the Infanta Ray that transforms Ace into a child//

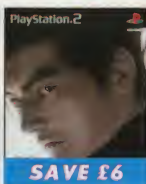
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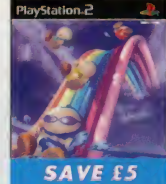
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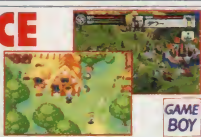
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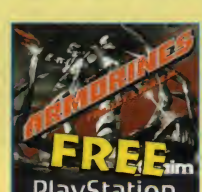
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PS one™

Edited by: Ryan Butt/Lee Hall



Close range murder and mayhem tops a menu of carnage in this full-on action/adventure.

BLADE

Based on the original Marvel Comics outing (and a wee bit of the film), the original Buffy returns for PSone...

Publisher: Activision
Developer: Hammerhead
Price: £29.99
Players: One
Out: Now



Not since *Street Of Rage* on the MegaDrive has a scrolling beat-'em-up been truly compelling, which is probably why *Blade* buckles under the burden of such high hopes.

Based on the Marvel Comics series (and not the Wesley Snipes flick which it looks like, oh no), *Blade* is a playable enough game, but one which would have benefitted from a few extra quid spent on it. The Intro alone tells us that this game has no real aspirations of greatness above its obvious cult status. Whereas *Resident Evil* would have blinded us with its state-of-the-art cinematics, *Blade* merely repulses with crude polygons. They wobble their heads and gestate to lifeless dialogue, but we already sense it's a game without soul.

The action starts like any training level – hit a few buttons, then prompts appear on unmissable idiot boards. But as you custom to the controls,

//The intro tells us that this game has no real aspirations above its obvious cult status//

you realise the game has been slowly progressing around you and the scenarios get steadily trickier. As *Blade* you can fire guns and use your fists. Targets range from human guards to menacing undead hordes, working out how to effectively deal with them is maybe this game's only underlining draw. Whereas humans can be killed by a single bullet to the head (complete with comedy brains spraying the walls) vampires take more punishment. A multi-hit kick and punch combo will usually do it and the vampire corpses evaporate when they die – a nice special effect.



Zombies, coppers and members of the public are all targets for our dashing anti-hero.

Until you utilise your inventory system, *Blade* comes across as almost unbearably hard. But by experimenting you'll learn how to identify which bullets are most effective for offing vampires and conservation of medical supplies.

Save points are scattered freely when you start, but soon become sparse and infrequent, so you'll have to battle more enemies and solve more puzzles before you can record your progress. This isn't necessarily a bad thing, but by the fifth time you cock-up a certain section and have to revert back to your save point, the game suddenly loses its already scant appeal.

With no two-player option, some occasionally unhelpful camera angles and the same, boring, repetitive gameplay that so nearly became extinct with the demise of the 16 bit era, *Blade* really isn't very good at all. But with a bigger budget and a greater array of moves, it could have been so much better. □ Ryan Butt



Once killed, the remains of your foes lingers on the carpet. Mind that pancreas as you kill! Kill! Kill!

PSone™

BLADE

Graphics

Basic animation and environments.

06

Sound

Inoffensive techno music for the lugs.

06

Gameplay

Repetitive combat, tedious wandering.

05

Life span

Very challenging. Could get into it.

07

Good comic, good film, but sadly a forgettable licence of either. Could've done better with more thought.

06

VERDICT

DUKE NUKEM: LAND OF THE BABES

He came, he saw, he blasted everything that moved...



Duke Nukem made a massive contribution to videogame history. He brought violence into the mainstream and precipitated games such as *Metal Gear Solid*, which evolved in reaction to his cheesy violence with their emphasis on stealth.

Land of The Babes takes a ridiculous 'animals-rule-a-world-inhabited-by-fit-birds' plot as the basis for a tempered action shooter. Duke has an increased repertoire of jerky manoeuvres in a game essentially about using massive weapons.

It's fun but lacks the polish, looks and puzzle balance to rival the better *Tomb Raiders*. It's raw and offensive, providing an alternative to fighting in the kebab shop on a Saturday night. **Lee Hall**



How do you stop a gun-toting rat? Simple. Blast him and his pals with a face-melting laser.

Publisher: Infogrames
Developer: n-Space
Price: £29.99
Players: 1-2
Out: March

PSone™

Unrefined controls, looks and basic puzzling let down an otherwise decent action adventure. Yet it's still not the merciless killing spree you'd expect.

07

VERDICT

K-1 GRAND PRIX

Another contender for the King of the Ring title falls just short



K-1 is a hardcore, one-on-one sport featuring competitors with a variety of fighting styles – most of the arts have a K in the name, which explains the title.

This is predictably big in Japan and could have converted well. Unfortunately Jaleco got it wrong in several respects. It's too slow and the defensive aspect is poorly managed – you can't fight from behind your guard, thus compromising counter attacks and reducing K-1 to a slugging match.

In the K-1 Challenge mode – a progressive career option – you can set up inactive training regimes and 'buy' new moves. The fights themselves contain film replays set to music and the animation isn't bad either. **Lee Hall**



K-1 Grand Prix positions itself at the head of the chasing pack, but *Knockout Kings 2001* still rules.

Publisher: Eon
Developer: Jaleco
Price: £29.99
Players: 1-2
Out: Now

PSone™

It's better than *Prince Naseem Boxing*, but lacks the pace and tactical edge needed to make it a truly good title. And it could be a contender...

05

VERDICT

DANGER GIRL

Big boobs and jiggling asses. Has it come to this?



The engine behind *Duke Nukem* drives this comic book conversion, featuring three gorgeous women with boobs that would literally put Lara's in the shade, were they laid side by side.

There's certainly a willing parade of cannon fodder, but this appropriately sneaks into the stealth action bracket. If you blast through the game in search of your Neo Nazi nemesis you'll run out of ammo and have to start over. The presence of nice weapons, gadgets and the odd vehicle is spoiled primarily by *Duke*-style control glitches. *Danger Girl* is decent, throwaway fun with few pretensions and the straightforward gameplay is sufficient to warrant a look. **Lee Hall**



Based on the *Duke* engine, *Danger Girl* has just as many knockers and it's really rather good.

Publisher: THQ
Developer: n-Space
Price: £29.99
Players: 1-2
Release: March

PSone™

Decent balance of blasting and sneaking about with three ridiculously attractive heroines. It's hardly cutting edge stuff, but fun nonetheless.

07

VERDICT

PSone™

ROUNDUP



NEWS

LIBERO GRANDE 2

The prequel was the first real football simulation on PlayStation. By this we mean that you controlled just one player and had to run around the pitch screaming at people to pass to you. Needless to say it bombed, but that hasn't dissuaded SCE from releasing this Namco-developed sequel. It features enhanced player AI, more formations, over 700 individual players and 32 international squads. But with few changes in the actual gameplay, will anyone take notice this time round?



PREVIEW

THE EMPEROR'S NEW GROOVE

Based loosely on the plot of the forthcoming Disney film, *TENG* is currently nearing completion. The game begins after a stropky Inca Emperor (you) named Kuzco is involved in an assassination attempt, turned into a llama and is banished from his domain. You must learn various skills as the and traverse numerous film-based platform locations. With smart Disney-esque graphics and smooth gameplay on offer, this should get you into the groove. Ahem.



PREVIEW

TIME CRISIS: PROJECT TITAN

Lightgun-owning PSone gamers have had little to wave their pistols at of late, but Namco is currently working on a sequel to smash hit shoot-'em-up, *Time Crisis*. In the sequel, top secret agent and occasional Elvis lookalike, Richard Miller, is framed for an assassination he didn't commit. With all communication to his corner severed, he has just 24 hours to clear his name before being handed over to the authorities.

ALSO RELEASED...

Football focused in *LMA MANAGER 2001*... Dragon-slaying in *LEGEND OF DRAGON*... Terrorist-thwarting in *SPEC OPS: RANGER ELITE*... Retro madness in Namco's *MS PAC-MAN'S MAZE MADNESS*... Table-tilting in *PINBALL POWER*... Road-running in *FROGGER 2* and space-crusading in a remake of the classic *GALAGA*... For all the latest PSone news, reviews and demos, see **OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE**...

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Edited by: Sam Richards

media

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PS2 doesn't just play games, you know. Here's some other stuff you might like...

Text by: Sam Richards/Lee Hall/Paul Fitzpatrick/Joao Diniz Sanches/George Walter



Leonardo DiCaprio reaches for a giant sand pie hidden just off camera.

THE BEACH

20th Century Fox/£19.99/Out now

Film: This adaptation of the Alex Garland novel by *Trainspotting* team Danny Boyle and John Hodge is worth seeking out. Watching the camera pan over the endless sun-kissed beaches of Thailand's islands is pure escapist pleasure.

The story is fairly true to the novel but it deviates inappropriately. Leo DiCaprio is quietly impressive as Richard who discovers directions to a hidden paradise beach community when fellow traveller Daffy commits suicide. At first, it seems Richard has arrived in Eden but tensions eventually

tear the community apart. The film loses its way when, ostracised from his companions, Richard begins to hallucinate (the sequence where he imagines himself in a videogame is particularly embarrassing). However, the movie does contrive a more satisfying ending to the tale than the one originally conceived by Garland. **SR**

Features: Deleted scenes, All Saints' *Pure Shores* video, storyboards, cast blos and audio commentary by Director Danny Boyle.

Verdict: A flawed film but the whole package makes a fine winter warmer. **6/10**



PHOTO: KOBAL COLLECTION

MULHOLLAND FALLS

Universal/£17.99/Out now

Film: In Fifties LA, four tough cops led by Max Hoover (Nick Nolte) are busy proving the adage that cops are uniformed thugs. The discovery of a girl's battered corpse leads Hoover to dredge up his past and clash with government agencies.

The whole story line smacks of TV drama, even down to the unimaginative musical score and *Mulholland Falls* is sometimes strangely reminiscent of a double-episode of *Columbo*, especially when Nolte almost slips into an impression of the glass-eyed murder detective.

Even the normally-outstanding John Malkovich can't raise the tone as his character – General Timms, Head of the Atomic Energy Commission – is marginalised and one-dimensional. Director Lee Tamahori has graduated to *The Sopranos* since this 1995 release but his lack of film experience is apparent. **LH**
Features: Just the theatrical trailer, a handful of stills and brief filmographies of the cast and crew.

Verdict: A decidedly average thriller, although the hats add a nice touch. **5/10**



BLOOD SIMPLE

Universal/£17.99/Out now

Film: After working as Assistant Editor on *Evil Dead*, Joel Coen made *Blood Simple* with brother Ethan. And although it lacks the high-gloss appeal of their more recent hits (*Fargo*, *The Big Lebowski*) it displays many Coen Brothers trademarks.

In this enjoyable film noir, a Texan bar owner pays a private eye to kill his wife and her lover. Instead, the PI takes the money and shoots the bar owner. From here the plot descends into a catalogue of guilt, misunderstanding and brutal murder, including impalement and premature burial.

The black humour of their future work is evident, with M Emmet Walsh portraying an entirely believable seedy investigator and John Getz as the impotent bar owner. Through use of clever lighting and camera work an incredible sense of filth and decay is established, as well as visually representing the truism of the title – it's bloody, but certainly not simple. **GW**
Features: Distinct lack of, but the digital clarity adds to the enjoyment of the film.
Verdict: The Coens start their film careers as they mean to go on. Dark. **8/10**



M:I-2

Paramount/£19.99/Out now

Film: To the uninitiated, there's little indication that Director John Woo's outing with the IMF team is a sequel to *Mission: Impossible*. This is more of a reinterpretation than a development of the franchise. *M:I-2's* Ethan Hunt (still played by Tom Cruise) has lost his naivety and preppy haircut, re-emerging with an action mullet and an attitude to match. Hunt's assistants (including the return of Ving Rhames) are just bit players. The lens never lets you forget that this is the Cruiser's film.

After claims that the first film's plot was baffling, *M:I-2* goes to the other extreme. The story revolves around a lethal, stolen

virus, but rest assured it's never allowed to get in the way of the action, which is fair enough when you've got Woo orchestrating it. As you'd expect from the man behind *Face/Off* and *The Killer* the stunts are outrageous and beautifully captured. Sometimes your suspension of disbelief will be tested to the brink of destruction, but if you're after cerebellum-fritzing brain candy, you could do a lot worse. **PF**

Features: A low-down on 11 of the action sequences and a spoof documentary about Cruise's stunt double.

Verdict: Above average but lacks brains to accompany the pyrotechnic brawn. **7/10**



BRAVEHEART

20th Century Fox/£22.99/Out now

Film: Bravely opting to do a Costner, Mel Gibson elected to both direct and star in what transpired to be the 1995 Academy Award winner for Best Picture.

Wishing to recreate the Hollywood epics of yesteryear, Australia's most successful acting export donned the tartan of William Wallace, a peaceful 13th Century commoner, whose revenge on the English after his wife is brutally annihilated rapidly escalates into Scotland's bloody fight for independence.

Tremendous battle sequences ably supported by a compelling narrative, a strong cast (Patrick McGoohan as Edward I

is particularly memorable) and brawny directing result in an uncommonly distinguished production. **JDS**
Features: Don't get too excited at the prospect of this two-disc set. The bonus DVD is solely devoted to Gibson's '*Braveheart: A Filmmaker's Passion*', a making-of documentary that despite being very watchable still feels disappointingly brief at 30 minutes. Back on the main disc, only an insightful director's commentary fleshes out the package somewhat.

Verdict: Not the most historically correct account, but one of the most accomplished Hollywood ventures of the last century. **8/10**

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GANGSTER NO 1

FilmFour/£19.99/Out now

Film: The film world operates on a thriving copycat model – successful ventures are likely to be aped in the hope of being able to cash in. *Gangster No 1* appeared last year, part of the predictable wave of London gangster flicks that emerged following the success of *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels*. Some 'me too' productions did bring something new or interesting to the mix – that isn't the case here.

The descent into criminal-world madness of the young Sixties gangster is a

hackneyed narrative, compensated for by the startling level of violence and profanity. Yes, *Gangster No. 1* is perfectly watchable stuff, boasting a couple of fine performances (Eddie Marsan in particular). Dénouement is effective, if clichéd and unbalanced, but it's hard to leave without the nagging feeling that it's all been a pointless exercise. **JDS**

Features: Absorbing Director's commentary and a selectable music-only track.

Verdict: Unbalanced and predictable yet stylishly filmed and still entertaining. **5/10**



ANGEL HEART

Momentum/£17.99/Out now

Film: As Harold Angel, Mickey Rourke enjoys his finest hour playing a small time Fifties private detective suffering long-term amnesia. When he's hired by an enigmatic stranger Louis Chypre (Robert De Niro) Angel is dragged along a bloody murder trail leading to self-discovery and an appropriately dark ending.

Sadly, the movie's contemporary appeal (it was first released in cinemas in 1987) is lessened by the advent of more recent, sophisticated offerings that have pillaged *Angel Heart's* style but improved upon the execution. David Fincher's *Se7en* and *Fight Club* echo *Angel Heart's* visual toughness and their notoriety means viewers will anticipate plot developments here too easily.

Nevertheless *Angel Heart* is a welcome perversion of the detective genre. Given the proliferation of religious and occult imagery in the film, it's appropriate that the story eventually arrives in the voodoo community of Louisiana. Rourke is as natural when violently interrogating witnesses as he is when playing up to the more blackly comic requirements (Angel has an unusual fear of chickens). Meanwhile De Niro's brief appearances are priceless. **LH**

Features: Director Alan Parker's commentary provides a good, contemporary perspective on the film.

Verdict: The film is certainly ahead of its time and the appealing package makes it well worth revisiting. **7/10**



There's Something About Mary: for Valentine's Day, why not give your lady hair gel?

TOP 10 ROM COM DVDS

Four Weddings And A Funeral

(MGM/£15.99)
Film: A career high for Hughie G as he comically prostrates himself before alluring American Andie MacDowell while hotfooting it from church to church. Cheery Britcom at its best, although we do hold it responsible for *Notting Hill*.
Features: Production featurette; theatrical trailers

Pretty Woman

(Touchstone/£19.99)
Film: Tart with a heart Julia Roberts melts stressed exec Richard Gere as a business proposition turns into love for the unlikely couple. It's hard not to be charmed by the leads' chemistry even if you do have to leave your critical faculties at the door. Roberts has never been better.
Features: None

Breakfast At Tiffany's

(Paramount/£19.99)
Film: Quite simply one of the most romantic films ever made. A youthful George Peppard is bewitched by kooky free spirit, Holly Golightly (an impossibly elegant Audrey Hepburn). The road to true love captured with humour, style and a touch of craziness. Essential.
Features: Theatrical trailer

Jerry Maguire

(Columbia TriStar/£19.99)
Film: Disillusioned sports agent Maguire (Tom Cruise in fine form) loses his job in a fit of idealism and sets up on his

own with vision-sharing assistant (Renee Zellweger). One whirlwind wedding later and they realise they scarcely know each other. Will the relationship survive their marriage?
Features: Theatrical trailer, production notes

Arthur

(Warners/£15.99)
Film: Rich, happy drunk Arthur (Dudley Moore) is heir to a vast fortune that he will forfeit unless he enters a loveless, political marriage. Arthur sees little reason to resist until he falls in love with sassy poor girl Linda (Liza Minnelli). Moore's endearingly hazy performance provides laughs aplenty.
Features: None

Shakespeare In Love

(Universal/£19.99)
Film: Shakespeare himself can lay some claim to inventing the rom com and here Will finds himself the subject of a biographical rewrite in which a foxy chick eases his writers block. Cry like Gwyneth at the sappy conclusion.
Features: Making Of documentary; commentary by cast and crew; theatrical trailer; 21 TV spots; deleted scenes.

There's Something About Mary

(20th Century Fox/£21.99)
Film: A film which includes that zipper scene, that hair gel gag and crudely tramples on as many PC principles as possible, makes it the romantic comedy

you can watch with the lads.
Features: Theatrical trailer; music video; karaoke section; commentary by Directors the Farrelly Brothers; Behind The Zipper featurette.

Roxanne

(Columbia TriStar/£19.99)
Film: *Cyano De Bergerac* relocated to the contemporary US suburbs and starring Steve Martin as the chap with the colossal conk, wowling the titular heroine by poetic proxy.
Features: Filmographies; theatrical trailer.

Groundhog Day

(Columbia TriStar/£19.99)
Film: Egotistical weatherman Phil Connors (Bill Murray at his sarcastic best) visits smalltown America and becomes trapped in a time loop. Cursed to live 2 February over and over, Phil swings between despair and contentment trying every trick in the book to win over Andie MacDowell. Hilarious romp that resists the saccharine as long as it possibly can.
Features: Theatrical trailer; filmographies.

10 Things I Hate About You

(Buena Vista/£17.99)
Film: Another Shakey-inspired rom com, transporting *Twining Of The Shrew* to an American high-school. Julia Stiles steals the show as riot girl Kat – her put-downs are sharp but she eventually succumbs to the wily wooing of the school rebel. Surprisingly edifying stuff.
Features: None

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Club music compilations explode into the DVD era with D-Rom.

Bored of endless Ibiza compilations that always seem to share the same tracklisting? Fed up with the inability of the compact disc to embrace the Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound revolution? Want to fill your frontroom with the latest club sounds while watching exclusive footage from the most exciting clubs in Ibiza, Miami and beyond on your TV? Then D-Rom is your saviour.

D-Rom is not just a dance label, it's a whole new concept in club compilations. For a start, the music is mixed on to a DVD especially for enjoyment in Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound. For anyone who's ever watched a movie on DVD with special effects blasting astonishingly out of speakers both in front and behind you for that ultra-immersive experience, the idea of music mixed especially for this format is deeply enticing. D-Roms are naturally compatible with the PlayStation 2 and if you've already hooked up your console to a state-of-the-art speaker system, prepare for a some serious bass-driven punch.

The opportunity for a DVD to support visuals in addition to audio has not been passed over by the D-Rom team. Following the lead of Underworld's ground-breaking *Everything*, *Everything DVD*, the music is supported by impressive graphical mixes.

These aren't the bog-standard juxtapositions of gurning clubbers and dated CG favoured by cheap late-night club programmes on cable. Instead, Nick Warren's progressive Ibiza mix, for example, is accompanied by impressively treated footage of Mediterranean sunrises, the sexiest podium dancers strutting their stuff in Pacha or Amnesia and even a trippy sequence which

appears to be filmed in a lo-tech factory manufacturing giant glass bongos. Meanwhile the film accompanying Saeed & Palash's tough, tribal house set should be appropriated by the Miami tourist board.

The first D-Rom in the series is very much a dark and progressive house music affair featuring the aforementioned new mixes from Way Out West veteran Nick Warren and Washington DC newcomers Saeed & Palash. The latter became involved after an introduction by DJ legend Danny Tenaglia and are right behind the D-Rom music and visual concept.

"We feel that all music will soon be presented on DVDs in the new millennium," the duo enthuse. "The D-Rom DVDs are more interactive and personal than most mix CDs. They allow people to not only hear a mix set but to also get to know the artist up close and personal through interviews and behind-the-scenes action. You get more bang for your buck!"

More bang? Like all the best DVDs, D-Roms contain extra features, largely interviews with the DJs involved and related scene luminaries such as Paul Van Dyk and Timo Maas. The interviewer may not be quite on point and the questions seem a little irrelevant but you can't argue with his enthusiastic sentiments.

Oh yeah, if you don't yet have a surround sound speaker system, or wish to play Nick Warren or Saeed & Palash in your car or on your Discman, you can flip the DVD over and it becomes a normal CD featuring both of the mixes. See, these D-Rom chaps have thought of everything. **Sam Richards**



D-Rom: The Future

The Nick Warren/Saeed & Palash D-Rom is already in the shops and many additions to the series are planned. The next will boast a UK garage theme, and features mixes from Mike 'Ruff Cut' Lloyd, Master Stepz and Kiss FM's finest Bobby & Steve who have already described their effort as having "a funky, sexy, lush, cool soulful dance vibe." It will also include an interactive extra in the form of a virtual DJ booth where you can cut and mix a selection of garage tracks.

Available later in the year will be the chillout D-Rom (Chris Coco, Lenny Bizarrre), the dance music history D-Rom (Mike Cosford and Jon Da Silva) and the hip-hop D-Rom (DJ Craze).

* For more info on D-Rom visit www.d-rom.com
* For more info on Saeed & Palash visit www.addictiverecords.com



JAPANESE ENGLISH

www.english.com

Featuring such gems as a bright red teddy bear T-shirt proclaiming 'Please make me clean because I always want to be clean. Sometimes' and an elbow-cleaning brush called Shape 'Horny Remover', English looks affectionately at the strange tear-inducing of Japanese to English translation. Products ranging from toiletries to chocolate take on a new surreal edge when changed from their native kanji into English. Particular favourites include a Frazzle-style bacon snack called Porky Pork and Hoxly toilet paper which promises 'a rich and comfortable life with paper'. Visit this special Web site good. Rich laughs of belly soon follow heartily... **GW**



WOMEN GAMERS

www.womengamers.com

Well here's a turn-up for the books. Or maybe it isn't, depending on your gender. A Web site looking solely at women in the gaming world. Despite having rather a sparse selection of gaming reviews, which include a 'marketing effort towards women' category, what sets this Web site apart from the others of its type are the scholarly reports and essays on women and their experiences of gaming. Try reading 'The nice girl's guide to gaming etiquette' for the correct way to insult each other in multiplayer first-person shooters or ponder over the question, "Do men play Tomb Raider because of Lara Croft's bosom - or do they use Lara's bosom as an excuse to cover the fact that they identify with aspects of her persona?" Deep. **GW**

THE TOP FIVE

The best Tomb Raider movie Web sites.

1. www.tombraidermovie.com
The best site to download the full trailer.
2. www.tombraiderchronicles.com/trmovie
Features some excellent movie wallpaper.
3. www.theallsaints.com/tombraider.html
All Saints baby might be a star. Find out here.
4. www.tombraiders.com/movie
A very comprehensive list of news, pics and links.
5. www.trmovie.com
A great selection of on-set pictures and rumours.

THE FIRST QUARTER

Author: Steven L. Kent/**Publisher:** BWP Press/
Price: \$21.95/**See:** www.amazon.com

The millennium year produced a rash of definitive historical tomes on all subjects, but the videogames industry being around 25-years-old give or take, proved itself a more calendrically convenient topic than most. Steven L. Kent's weighty but vibrant investigation of the rise of global gaming is filled with intriguing insights from the mid-Seventies to the present day. The neat pun in the title – referring both to the first 25 years of videogames and the first 25 cents eagerly shoved into an arcade machine slot – are a clue that the book is written from an American perspective. That means scant mention of the Spectrum et al, but the Eighties battle between Sega and Nintendo is played out in dramatic terms.

Prefaced by Peter Molyneux and Jon Romero, *The First Quarter* has compiled quotations from a staggering array of industry luminaries from all eras. From cult game developers to company CEOs, everyone gets their say, making for a definitive read. Kent skates over the post-PlayStation era rather too rapidly but gaps here can be filled by reading *Revolutionaries At Sony* (see last issue). *The First Quarter* is an impressive document of an exciting time. Unfortunately it is currently only available from Amazon in the US so get those credit cards out. **SR**

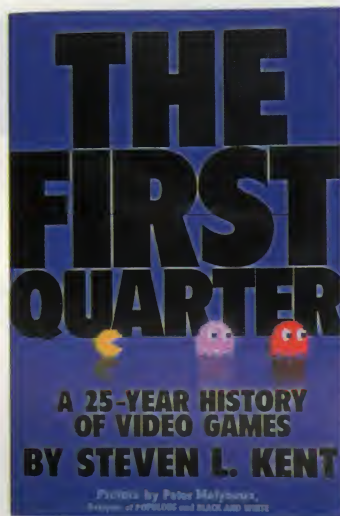
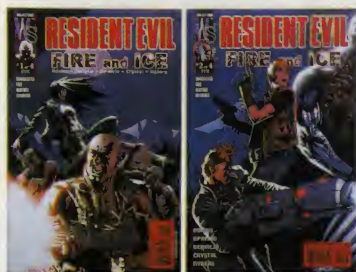


PHOTO: PHIL KNOTT

Mags we like



RESIDENT EVIL: FIRE AND ICE

Frequency: Bimonthly/**Price:** \$2.50/
See: www.wildstorm.com/residentevil

Even the most diligent of *Resi* boosters might've missed out on last year's *Resident Evil: The Official Comic Book Magazine*, a mag-sized anthology comic that visited Claire, Chris and chums on and off duty. The good news is that WildStorm have collected the four issues into a graphic novel, but the better news is that the DC-related comic company are now currently producing *Resident Evil: Fire And Ice*, a four-issue mini-series that introduces us to Charlie Company, a brand-new STARS special unit. The *Mission: Impossible*-style company's first mission is to track the source of an outbreak of Umbrella's G-Virus – a mutated



strain of the original T-Virus – at a travelling circus. Thus say hello to zombie lions, tigers, jugglers, trapeze artists and a clown who'll smack you to death with his arm. Lee Bermejo and Shawn Crystal's art is cartoon-simple but detailed (comic buffs should think Paul Neary does Paul Gulacy) while Ted Adams's and Kris Oprisko's scripts are generic action fare. Things get better word-wise though as Charlie Company splits off to find out just where these new variants of the Umbrella's virus are coming from. Think the A-Team meets *Day of the Dead* and you're there. After you with the Uzi... **MG**
Gaming content: Want to see how *Resi* could turn out? Come get some.

**Resident Evil: Fire And Ice* is available from all good comic shops. We grabbed ours at Forbidden Planet (Tel: 0207 836 4179)

TEXT: SAM RICHARDS

Nelly Furtado: her album may not be revolutionary, but we predict a bright future.



SLEEVENOTES (©)

Using the power of your PS2 with this month's best CDs.

NELLY FURTADO *Whoa, Nelly!* (Dreamworks)

Who? Crazy name, crazy girl. This half-Portuguese half-Canadian singer spices her radio-friendly guitar tunes with R&B, hip-hop and Latin grooves.



Highlights: The more unusual the mash-up of styles the better. *Baby Girl* is Destiny's Child do mariachi. Edie Brickell produced by Dr Dre? That'll be Turn Off The Light.

Lowlights: When the tempo drops, Nelly strays into the wannabe Suzanne Vega territory occupied by last month's featured kooky siren Dido.

Verdict: Nelly is the new Imani Coppola who was, in turn, the new female Beck. Expect to see her everywhere very soon. **6/10**

ARAB STRAP *The Red Thread* (Chemikal Underground)

Who? Manic depressive alcoholic Scottish tramps relating sad and beautiful stories of bad sex and heartbreak to a devoted fanbase.



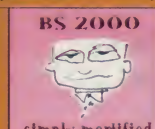
Highlights: The dark disco betrayal tale of *Love Detective*; the hymnal licks of *Amor Veneris* and *Haunt Me* which hint at a religious side to the Strap. Maybe.

Lowlights: Arab Strap have the tendency to wander off down a dingy cul-de-sac. *The Long Sea* particularly lies a little heavy in the stomach.

Verdict: Still slow, still sad, still sex-obsessed. The Strap don't evolve, they just fester. Beautifully. **7/10**

BS 2000 *Simply Mortified* (Grand Royal)

Who? Beastie Boys offshoot featuring Adam Horowitz and Amery AWOL Smith. Farfisa-driven lo-fi punk-hop doodles are the order of the day.



Highlights: The combination of cheap funk (*Sick For A Reason*, *The Scrappy*) and ad jingle doodles (*No Matter What Shoppe*) have an irresistible appeal.

Lowlights: The endless organ onslaught combined with a distinct lack of fidelity all round could conceivably grate after a period.

Verdict: Cheap, pointless, poorly recorded and disposable, but *Simply Mortified* is way more enjoyable than most big-budget studio fare. Punk lives! **7/10**

SLAVES ON DOPE *Inches From The Mainline* (Divine Recordings/Virgin)

Who? Nu-metalers freebasing cheap controversy in attempt to distinguish themselves from the crowd. Also the first signings to Ozzy Osbourne's own label.



Highlights: These are few. The title track at least has a melody and *No More Faith* is alright but they sound like poor parodies of SOD's rock heroes. Can you guess who?

Lowlights: These are many. Try *Bitch Slap*, *I Can't Die*, *Fallout* or any other of the hopelessly unremarkable grinds on offer.

Verdict: Enough tedious nu-metal already! If you wouldn't trust Ozzy to mind your pint, don't trust him to spot decent new music either. **2/10**

STEPHEN MALKMUS *Stephen Malkmus* (Domino)

Who? Ex-frontman of the late, lamented and legendary Pavement. Debut solo effort is more accessible than previous band work, although still suitably mental.



Highlights: The 90-second pop spurge of *Troubbble* (make this a hit!), and *Jo Jo's Jacket* which appears to be a song about being Yul Brynner.

Lowlights: Malkmus can come across as wacky rather than entertainingly skewed. See *Phantasies* for further evidence.

Verdict: Pavement devotees won't be disappointed but Malkmus has broadened his outlook to potentially snare a whole new audience. Shrewd fellow. **8/10**

>>ALSO RELEASED

John Frusciante *To Record Only Water For Ten Days* (Warners)/**Stacey Pullen** *Today Is The Tomorrow You Were Promised Yesterday* (Science)/**Teddy Thompson** *Teddy Thompson* (Virgin)/**Various Artists** *Magnum Opus* (Universal)/**Junior Vasquez** *Twilo Vol 1* (Virgin)

HARD

Tips, tactics, tricks, cheats. Want to rip your new games to shreds? Welcome to the section that's strictly for the Hardcore...



Come in, come in. Take a seat will you? Be with you in a minute. I'm a little too busy to write an Intro this month. SSX guide? Yes, the first instalment is here: full trick listing for the first four players and some great codes. More next month. *Smuggler's Run?* You've got to try those codes out. They've really got to be seen to be believed. We've got *Tekken Tag Tournament* hints as well. But over the page, yes there. *Armoured Core 2* codes. Oh, but there's sports as well. Hints on how to beat the first two levels of token challenges in *Madden 2001*. Get the right card and you can have a team of Mummies. It's all explained and of course there will be more next month. But like I said, just a little too busy to tell you about it now. Maybe you could come back later? Great. See you next month.

Paul Fitzpatrick

Paul Fitzpatrick
Staff Writer

HELP ME!

If you've got any special requests for tips, hints, codes or advice (providing it exists) I'm your dutiful manservant. In fact it's just lovely to know there are people out there who know my name. One day I might be able to join the happy people like you. For now I'm content to just lend my services to make your gaming life that bit more enjoyable. Write to me at: **Hardcore**, Official PlayStation 2 Magazine, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Electrical cyberpost to PS2@futurenet.co.uk

SSX

The exhaustive moves list. From easy stiffys to the hard Swiss Cheese and everything in-between.

Move difficulty ratings: ● Easy ■ Medium ◆ Hard

MAC

What Mac loses in speed and edging he makes up for in great stability and trick ratings. For these reasons he is a very good character to start the game with.



Age: 15
Height: 5'4"
Weight: 120lbs
Nationality: American
Blood type: O+
Riding style: Freestyle

Trick Name	Button Combination	Difficulty	Trick Points
Stiffy Air	□ □	●	300
Stalemaskey Air	□ □	●	300
Slob Air	□ □ □	●	300
Experimental Air	□ □ □ □	●	300
Nosebleed Air	□ □ □ □	●	600
Meatballed Spaghetti Air	□ □ □ □ □	●	600
Tail Grab Air	□ □	●	300
Swiss Cheese Air	□ □	●	300
Spaghetti Air	□ □ □	●	300
Holy Crail Air	□ □ □ □	●	600
360 Flying Squirrel	[←OR→] 360 □ □	●	1250
Tail Grab to Late Stiffy Air Swiss Cheese to Late Green Circle 1050	□ □ TO □ □	●	1050
Stalemaskey	□ □ TO □ □	●	1050
Lein to Late Tail Grab	□ □ TO □ □ □	●	1050
Spaghetti to Late Crail Air	□ □ □ TO □ □ □	●	1050
Slob to Late Experimental Air	□ □ □ TO □ □ □ □	●	1200
360 Mute	[←OR→] 360 □	●	1300
360 Swiss Cheese	[←OR→] 360 □ □	●	1400
180 Nose Grab	[←OR→] 180 □ □	●	1050
Slob to Late Flying Squirrel Air	□ □ □ TO □ □	●	1050
Front Flip Swiss Cheese to Late Fresh Stalemaskey	↑ 360 □ □ TO □ □ □	■	3300
Misty	[←OR→] 540 + ↑ 360	■	3120
720 Tail Wag	[←OR→] 720 □ □ □	■	3000
Back Flip 360 Fresh Stalemaskey	[←OR→] 360 + ↓ 360	■	3500
Front Flip Tail Grab	↑ 360 □ □	■	2200
Front Flip 180 Slob	[←OR→] 180 + ↑ 360 □ □ □	■	2500
Front Flip 180 Iffy Stiffy	[←OR→] 180 + ↑ 360 □ □ □ □	■	2550
720 Ripe Swiss Cheese	[←OR→] 720 □ □ □	■	2550
900 Iffy Stiffy	[←OR→] 900 □ □ □	■	2800
Back Flip Mean Lein	[↓ 360] □ □ □ □	■	2600
Front Flip 360 Mean Lein to Late Spaghetti	[←OR→] 360 + ↑ 360 □ □ □	■	4000
Back Flip 360 Unethical Experimental to Slob	[←OR→] 360 + ↓ 360 □ □ □ □ TO □ □ □	■	4000
Misty 720 Experimental	[←OR→] 720 + ↑ 360 □ □ □ □	■	4000
900 Tail Wag to Late Nosebleed	[←OR→] 900 □ □ □ □ TO □ □ □ □	■	4000
Front Flip 360 Method Madness to Late HOLY Crail	[←OR→] 360 360 □ □ TO □ □ □ □	■	4000
1260 Sinful Indy	[←OR→] 1260 □ □	■	4000
Misty 720 Crail	[←OR→] 720 + ↑ 360 □ □ □ □	■	4000
Rodeo	[←OR→] 540 + ↓ 360	■	3100
Misty Tail Grab	[←OR→] 540 + ↑ 360 □ □ □	■	3500
1080 Swiss Cheese	[←OR→] 1080 □ □ □	■	3600
Rodeo 720 Nose Grab to Late Iffy Stiffy	[←OR→] 720 + ↓ 360 □ □ □ TO □ □ □	◆	5000
Misty 720 Experimental to Late Ripe Swiss Cheese	[←OR→] 720 + ↑ 360 □ □ □ TO □ □ □ □	◆	5500
Double Back Flip 720 Skinned Flying Squirrel to Late Indy	[←OR→] 720 + ↓ 720 □ □ □ TO □ □	◆	6000
Double Rodeo Holy Crail	[←OR→] 1080 + ↓ 720 □ □ □ □	◆	7000
Rodeo Stiffy to Late Flying Squirrel	[←OR→] 540 + ↓ 360 □ □ TO □ □ □	◆	4200
Rodeo 900 Sinful Indy to Late Method	[←OR→] 900 + ↓ 360 □ □ TO □ □	◆	5400
Rodeo 1440	[←OR→] 1440 + ↓ 360	◆	7200
Misty 1080	[←OR→] 1080 + ↑ 360	◆	7900
Misty 1260 Tail Grab to Late Nose Grab	[←OR→] 1260 + ↑ 360 □ □ TO □ □ □	◆	7600
Double Misty Swiss Cheese	[←OR→] 1080 + ↑ 720 □ □ □	◆	5800

MOBY

As a Boardercross rider Moby has a good balance between the stability of a Freestyler and the speed of an Alpine rider. A great compromise.



Age: 18
Height: 5'10"
Weight: 180lbs
Nationality: British
Blood Type: A-
Riding Style: Boardercross

Trick Name	Button Combination	Difficulty	Trick Points
Stiffy Air	□ □	●	300
Stalemaskey Air	□ □	●	300
Slob Air	□ □ □	●	300
Experimental Air	□ □ □ □	●	300
Nosebleed Air	□ □ □ □	●	600
Meatballed Spaghetti Air	□ □ □ □ □	●	600
Tail Grab Air	□ □	●	300
Swiss Cheese Air	□ □	●	300
Spaghetti Air	□ □ □	●	300
Holy Crail Air	□ □ □ □	●	600
360 Flying Squirrel	[←OR→] 360 □ □	●	1250
Tail Grab to Late Stiffy Air Swiss Cheese to Late	□ □ TO □ □	●	1050
Stalemaskey	□ □ TO □ □	●	1050
Lein to Late Tail Grab	□ □ TO □ □ □	●	1050
Spaghetti to Late Crail Air	□ □ □ TO □ □ □	●	1050
Slob to Late Experimental Air	□ □ □ TO □ □ □ □	●	1200
360 Mute	[←OR→] 360 □	●	1300
360 Swiss Cheese	[←OR→] 360 □ □	●	1400
180 Nose Grab	[←OR→] 180 □ □	●	1050
Slob to Late Flying Squirrel Air	□ □ □ TO □ □	●	1050
Front Flip Swiss Cheese to Late Fresh Stalemaskey	↑ 360 □ □ TO □ □ □	■	3300
Misty	[←OR→] 540 + ↑ 360	■	3120
720 Tail Wag	[←OR→] 720 □ □ □	■	3000
Back Flip 360 Fresh Stalemaskey	[←OR→] 360 + ↓ 360 □ □ □	■	3500
Front Flip Tail Grab	↑ 360 □ □	■	2200
Front Flip 180 Slob	[←OR→] 180 + ↑ 360 □ □ □	■	2500
Front Flip 180 Iffy Stiffy	[←OR→] 180 + ↑ 360 □ □ □ □	■	2550
720 Ripe Swiss Cheese	[←OR→] 720 □ □ □	■	2550
900 Iffy Stiffy	[←OR→] 900 □ □ □	■	2800
Back Flip Mean Lein	[↓ 360] □ □ □ □	■	2600
Front Flip 360 Mean Lein to Late Spaghetti	[←OR→] 360 + ↑ 360 □ □ □ TO □ □ □	■	4000
Back Flip 360 Unethical Experimental to Slob	[←OR→] 360 + ↓ 360 □ □ □ □ TO □ □ □	■	4000
Misty 720 Experimental	[←OR→] 720 + ↑ 360 □ □ □ □	■	4000
900 Tail Wag to Late Nosebleed	[←OR→] 900 □ □ □ □ TO □ □ □ □	■	4000
Front Flip 360 Method Madness to Late HOLY Crail	[←OR→] 360 360 □ □ TO □ □ □ □	■	4000
1260 Sinful Indy	[←OR→] 1260 □ □	■	4000
Misty 720 Crail	[←OR→] 720 + ↑ 360 □ □ □ □	■	4000
Rodeo	[←OR→] 540 + ↓ 360	■	3100
Misty Tail Grab	[←OR→] 540 + ↑ 360 □ □ □	■	3500
1080 Swiss Cheese	[←OR→] 1080 □ □ □	■	3600
Rodeo 720 Nose Grab to Late Iffy Stiffy	[←OR→] 720 + ↓ 360 □ □ □ TO □ □ □	◆	5000
Misty 720 Experimental to Late Ripe Swiss Cheese	[←OR→] 720 + ↑ 360 □ □ □ TO □ □ □ □	◆	5500
Double Back Flip 720 Skinned Flying Squirrel to Late Indy	[←OR→] 720 + ↓ 720 □ □ □ TO □ □	◆	6000
Double Rodeo Holy Crail	[←OR→] 1080 + ↓ 720 □ □ □ □	◆	7000
Rodeo Stiffy to Late Flying Squirrel	[←OR→] 540 + ↓ 360 □ □ TO □ □ □	◆	4200
Rodeo 900 Sinful Indy to Late Method	[←OR→] 900 + ↓ 360 □ □ TO □ □	◆	5400
Rodeo 1440	[←OR→] 1440 + ↓ 360	◆	7200
Misty 1080	[←OR→] 1080 + ↑ 360	◆	7900
Misty 1260 Tail Grab to Late Nose Grab	[←OR→] 1260 + ↑ 360 □ □ TO □ □ □	◆	7600
Double Misty Swiss Cheese	[←OR→] 1080 + ↑ 720 □ □ □	◆	5800

COMPLETE PLAYER'S GUIDE

ELISE

Elise isn't an Alpine rider but most of her boards are Alpine boards so once her statistics are built up she becomes the second fastest rider after Hiro. But even from the start, she's no slouch in the speed department.



Age: 23
Height: 5'11"
Weight: 120lbs
Nationality: Canadian
Blood Type: O-
Riding Style: Boardercross

Trick Name	Button Combination	Difficulty	Trick Points
Tail Grab Air	⬅ ⬅	●	300
Iguana Air	⬅ ⬅	●	300
Japan Air	⬅ ⬅	●	300
Crail Air	⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	300
Canadian Bacon Air	⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	300
Experimental Air	⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	300
Sinful Indy Air	⬅ ⬅	●	600
Tail Wag Air	⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	600
Holy Crail Air	⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	600
Mean Lein Air	⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	600
360 iffy Stiffy	(←OR→) 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	1300
360 Nose Grab to Late Tail Grab	(←OR→) 360 ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅	●	2100
720 Tail Grab	(←OR→) 720 ⬅ ⬅	●	2300
Back Flip Stalefish to Late Indy	↓ 360 ⬅ TO ⬅	●	2600
360 Roast Beef Jerky Air	(←OR→) 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	1300
540 Spin	(←OR→) 540	●	1430
360 Canadian Back Bacon	(←OR→) 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	1430
Back Flip 360	(←OR→) 360 + ↓ 360	●	1690
Front Flip 360	(←OR→) 360 + ↑ 360	●	1690
360 Stalefish	(←OR→) 360 ⬅	●	1300
720 Stalefish to Latern Mute	(←OR→) 720 ⬅ TO ⬅	■	3000
Misty	(←OR→) 540 + ↑ 360	■	3120
Rodeo	(←OR→) 540 + ↓ 360	■	3120
Back Flip 360 Method Madness	(←OR→) 360 + ↓ 360 ⬅ ⬅	■	3200
900 Iguana	(←OR→) 900 ⬅ ⬅	■	3000
Misty Tail Grab	(←OR→) 540 + ↑ 360 ⬅ ⬅	■	3660
Back Flip 360 Stalefish to Late Indy	(←OR→) 360 + ↓ 360 ⬅ TO ⬅	■	2800
720 Japan	(←OR→) 720 ⬅ ⬅	■	2400
Back Flip Canadian Bacon	↓ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	■	2200
Front Flip 180 Stiffy	(←OR→) 180 + ↑ 360 ⬅ ⬅	■	2600
Double Front Flip Mutation Air	↑ 720 ⬅ ⬅	■	4000
900 Method to Late Combo Grab	(←OR→) 900 ⬅ TO ⬅ TO ⬅	■	4500
Misty Rocket	(←OR→) 540 + ↑ 360 ⬅ ⬅	■	3700
900 Experimental	(←OR→) 900 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	■	3300
Rodeo Tail Grab	(←OR→) 540 + ↓ 360 ⬅ ⬅	■	3800
Front Flip 360 Japan to Late Rocket	(←OR→) 360 + ↑ 360 ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅	■	3600
Misty Mute	(←OR→) 540 + ↑ 360 ⬅	■	3500
900 indy	(←OR→) 900 ⬅	■	3400
Back Flip 360 Mute to Late Indy	(←OR→) 360 + ↓ 360 ⬅ TO ⬅	■	3700
Back Flip 360 Nose Grab	(←OR→) 360 + ↓ 360 ⬅ ⬅	■	3200
1080 Mutation to Late Sinful Indy	(←OR→) 1080 ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅	◆	5000
Full On 900	(←OR→) 900 + ↑ 360	◆	5700
1080 Unethical Experimental	(←OR→) 1080 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	4000
Double Rodeo Experimental	(←OR→) 1080 + ↓ 720 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	6500
Double Misty Method to Late Indy	(←OR→) 1080 + ↑ 720 ⬅ TO ⬅	◆	7000
1080 Lein	(←OR→) 1080 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	4400
Misty 900	(←OR→) 900 + ↑ 360	◆	4100
Double Back Flip Experimental	↓ 720 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	5200
Misty 720 Holy Crail	(←OR→) 720 + ↑ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	5000
Misty 1080	(←OR→) 1080 + ↑ 360	◆	4500

KAORI

Kaori is the business. Of the initial four riders, she is definitely the best. She has the best trick rating bar none and her edging and speed are great. Even once you've unlocked the other four characters you'll use Kaori.



Age: 16
Height: 5'
Weight: 100lbs
Nationality: Japanese
Blood Type: B
Riding Style: Freestyle

Trick Name	Button Combination	Difficulty	Trick Points
Flying Squirrel Air	⬅ ⬅	●	300
Stalefish Air	⬅	●	310
Stiffy Air	⬅ ⬅	●	310
Nuclear Air	⬅ ⬅	●	310
Crail Air	⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	320
Japan Air	⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	330
Canadian Back Bacon Air	⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	720
Rocket Booster Air	⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	730
Gleeful Melancholy	⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	760
Holy Crail Air	⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	790
360 Nuclear Reactor	(←OR→) 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	1590
540 Sinful Indy	(←OR→) 540 ⬅ ⬅	●	990
Experimental to Late Canadian Bacon Air	⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	1270
360 Flying Squirrel	(←OR→) 360 ⬅ ⬅	●	1280
Back Flip	↓ 360	●	1690
360 Tail Grab	(←OR→) 360 ⬅ ⬅	●	1410
Front Flip	↑ 360	●	1690
Back Flip Mute	↓ 360 ⬅	●	1980
360 Canadian Bacon	(←OR→) 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	1350
Canadian Bacon to Late Japan	⬅ ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	■	1150
Front Flip Nuclear	↑ 360 ⬅ ⬅	■	2990
720 Flying Squirrel	(←OR→) 720 ⬅ ⬅	■	2740
720 Melancholy	(←OR→) 720 ⬅ ⬅	■	2500
Front Flip 360	(←OR→) 360 + ↑ 360	■	2690
Back Flip Indy	↓ 360 ⬅	■	2040
Front Flip Japan	↑ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	■	2140
720 Stiffy	(←OR→) 720 ⬅ ⬅	■	2390
540 Unethical Experimental	(←OR→) 540 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	■	2860
540 Rocket	(←OR→) 540 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	■	2030
720 Canadian Bacon	(←OR→) 720 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	■	2510
Back Flip 360 Nose Grab	(←OR→) 360 + ↓ 360 ⬅ ⬅	■	3040
900 Melancholy to Late Nuclear	(←OR→) 900 ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅	■	3360
900 Nosebleed	(←OR→) 900 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	■	3490
Back Flip Unethical Experimental	↓ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	■	3630
900 Canadian Back Bacon	(←OR→) 900 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	■	3900
900 Stiffy to Late Flying Squirrel	(←OR→) 900 ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅	■	3960
Rodeo	(←OR→) 540 + ↓ 360	■	3120
Front Flip Tail Grab	↑ 360 ⬅ ⬅	■	3060
900 Stiffy	(←OR→) 900 ⬅ ⬅	■	3040
Back Flip 360 Gleeful Melancholy	(←OR→) 360 + ↓ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	3610
Misty Canadian Back Bacon	(←OR→) 540 + ↑ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	4230
Misty Canadian Bacon to Late Japan	(←OR→) 540 + ↑ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	4230
Rodeo Tail Grab to Late Nosebleed	(←OR→) 540 + ↓ 360 ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	4730
Misty Japan to Late Combo Grab	(←OR→) 540 + ↑ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	5290
Misty Unethical Experimental to Late Melancholy	(←OR→) 540 + ↑ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	5560
900 Unethical Experimental to Late Made In Japan	(←OR→) 900 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	5600
Double Front Flip 720 Experimental	(←OR→) 720 + ↑ 720 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	6640
Rodeo Melancholy to Late Nuclear	(←OR→) 540 + ↓ 360 ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅	◆	4450
Double Misty Melancholy	(←OR→) 1080 + ↑ 720 ⬅ ⬅	◆	7470
Double Rodeo Canadian Bacon to Late Japan	(←OR→) 1080 + ↓ 720 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	7880

SSX continued

JURGEN

Jurgen is unlocked when you win one gold medal. He's a solid guy and his stability rating reflects this, but he's slow and far from the best when it comes to tricks. He has his uses but you're likely to use other riders more often.



Age: 35
Height: 6'5"
Weight: 235lbs
Nationality: German
Blood Type: A
Riding Style: Boardercross

Trick Name	Button Combination	Difficulty	Trick Points
Mute Air	⬅	●	300
Tail Grab Air	⬅ ⬅	●	300
Stiffy Air	⬅ ⬅	●	300
Flying Squirrel Air	⬅ ⬅	●	300
Crail Air	⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	300
Slob Air	⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	300
Rocket Air	⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	300
Method Madness Air	⬅ Ⓞ	●	520
Mutation Air	⬅ Ⓞ	●	580
Skinned Flying Squirrel Air	⬅ ⬅ Ⓞ	●	620
540 Crail	(←OR→) 540 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	1730
Unethical Experimental Air	⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ Ⓞ	●	1180
360 Nuclear	(←OR→) 360 ⬅ ⬅	●	1410
180 Rocket Booster	(←OR→) 180 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ Ⓞ	●	1400
Back Flip	↓ 360	●	1690
540 Stalefish	(←OR→) 540 ⬅	●	1830
180 Lein to Late Nuclear	(←OR→) 180 ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅	●	1520
360 Stiffy	(←OR→) 360 ⬅ ⬅	●	1270
360 Tail Wag	(←OR→) 360 ⬅ ⬅ Ⓞ	●	1680
Front Flip	↑ 360	■	1690
720 Experimental	(←OR→) 720 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	■	2290
720 Iffy Stiffy	(←OR→) 720 ⬅ ⬅ Ⓞ	■	2420
900 Method Madness	(←OR→) 900 ⬅ Ⓞ	■	2920
Back Flip Mutation	↓ 360 ⬅ Ⓞ	■	2290
Front Flip Made in Japan	↑ 360 ⬅ ⬅ Ⓞ	■	2260
900 Flying Squirrel	(←OR→) 900 ⬅ ⬅	■	2790
720 Slob Air	(←OR→) 720 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	■	2430
Front Flip Lein	↑ 360 ⬅ ⬅	■	2050
Back Flip Rocket	↓ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	■	2070
1080 Spin	(←OR→) 1080	■	2868
900 Tail Wag	(←OR→) 900 ⬅ ⬅ Ⓞ	■	3080
Misty	(←OR→) 540 + ↑ 360	■	3120
Rodeo	(←OR→) 540 + ↓ 360	■	3120
Misty Nuclear Reactor	(←OR→) 540 + ↑ 360 ⬅ ⬅ Ⓞ	■	3710
Front Flip 360 Experimental to Late Slob	(←OR→) 360 + ↑ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	■	3810
Rodeo Holy Crail	(←OR→) 540 + ↓ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ Ⓞ	■	3960
Rodeo Mutation	(←OR→) 540 + ↓ 360 ⬅ Ⓞ	■	3740
Front Flip 360 Rocket Booster	(←OR→) 360 + ↑ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ Ⓞ	■	3440
Misty Holy Crail	(←OR→) 540 + ↑ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ Ⓞ	■	3850
Rodeo Unethical Experimental	(←OR→) 540 + ↓ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ Ⓞ	◆	3830
Front Flip 360 Nuclear to Late Lein	(←OR→) 360 + ↑ 360 ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅	◆	4060
Back Flip 360 Nuclear Reactor to Late Mean Lein	(←OR→) 360 + ↓ 360 ⬅ ⬅ Ⓞ TO ⬅ ⬅ Ⓞ	◆	4330
Misty 720 Iffy Stiffy	(←OR→) 720 + ↑ 360 ⬅ ⬅ Ⓞ	◆	4330
Misty Flying Squirrel to Late Iffy Stiffy	(←OR→) 540 + ↑ 360 ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅ Ⓞ	◆	4350
Misty Skinned Flying Squirrel to Late Unethical Experimental	(←OR→) 540 + ↑ 360 ⬅ ⬅ Ⓞ TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ Ⓞ	◆	4970
Full on 900 Mute to Late Stiffy	(← 900 + ↑ 720) ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅	◆	6820
Tripped Out 900 Stiffy to Late Crail	(← 900 + ↓ 720) ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	7160
Double Rodeo Nosebleed	(←OR→) 1080 + ↓ 720 ⬅ ⬅ Ⓞ	◆	7360
900 Skinned Flying Squirrel	(←OR→) 900 ⬅ ⬅ Ⓞ	◆	4140
Double Rodeo Filet O'Stalefish	(←OR→) 1080 + 2 720 ⬅ Ⓞ	◆	6760

JP

Win two gold medals and JP will be unlocked. He's pretty sharp in all departments with the exception of edging. Not a bad choice of racer, but then there's Kaori...



Age: 25
Height: 5'10"
Weight: 180lbs
Nationality: French
Blood Type: O
Riding Style: Freestyle

Trick Name	Button Combination	Difficulty	Trick Points
Stalefish	⬅	●	300
Mute	⬅	●	300
Roast Beef	⬅ ⬅	●	300
Rocket	⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	300
Iguana	⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	300
Japan	⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	300
Tail Wag	⬅ ⬅ Ⓞ	●	600
Roast Beef Jerky	⬅ ⬅ Ⓞ	●	600
Rocket Booster Air	⬅ ⬅ ⬅ Ⓞ	●	600
180 Method	(←OR→) 180 ⬅	●	800
540 Tail Grab	(←OR→) 540 ⬅ ⬅	●	1880
540 Spin	(←OR→) 540	●	1430
360 Indy	(←OR→) 360 ⬅	●	1370
180 Nose Grab	(←OR→) 180 ⬅ ⬅	●	1010
360 Roast Beef	(←OR→) 360 ⬅ ⬅	●	1370
180 Lein	(←OR→) 180 ⬅ ⬅	●	1010
540 Crail	(←OR→) 540 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	1760
Back Flip	↓ 360	●	1690
Nose Grab to Late Tail Wag	⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅ Ⓞ	●	1480
720 Spin	(←OR→) 720	■	1910
900 Spin	(←OR→) 900	■	2370
Back Flip 360	(←OR→) 360 + ↓ 360	■	2640
Front Flip Roast Beef to Late Tail Grab	↑ ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅	■	2710
720 Flying Squirrel	(←OR→) 720 ⬅ ⬅	■	2720
Front Flip Indy	↑ 360 ⬅	■	2090
720 Nose Grab	(←OR→) 720 ⬅ ⬅	■	2410
Front Flip 360 Flying Squirrel	(←OR→) 360 + ↑ 360 ⬅ ⬅	■	3000
Misty 720	(←OR→) 720 + ↑ 360	■	2700
Back Flip Stiffy	↓ 360 ⬅ ⬅	■	2160
720 Crail	(←OR→) 720 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	■	2580
Misty	(←OR→) 540 + ↑ 360	■	3120
900 Iguana	(←OR→) 900 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	■	3310
Front Flip 360 Lein to Late Stalefish	(←OR→) 360 + ↑ 360 ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅	■	4140
Rodeo	(←OR→) 540 + ↓ 360	■	3120
900 Roast Beef Jerky	(←OR→) 900 ⬅ ⬅ Ⓞ	■	3160
Back Flip 180 Experimental to Late Crail	(←OR→) 180 + ↓ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	■	3340
900 Flying Squirrel to Late Stiffy	(←OR→) 900 ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅	■	3350
Back Flip 360 Nose Grab to Late Mute	(←OR→) 360 + ↓ 360 ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅	■	3570
Rodeo Lein	(←OR→) 540 + ↓ 360 ⬅ ⬅	■	3640
Front Flip 360 Nosebleed	(←OR→) 360 + ↑ 360 ⬅ ⬅ Ⓞ	◆	3410
Misty 1260	(←OR→) 1260 + ↑ 360	◆	5030
Double Rodeo Mute	(←OR→) 1080 + ↓ 720 ⬅	◆	6650
Misty 720 Experimental	(←OR→) 720 + ↑ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	6740
Montezuma 1260	(←OR→) 1260 + ↓ 720	◆	8280
Rodeo Roast Beef to Late Lein	(←OR→) 540 + ↓ 360 ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅	◆	4320
Front Flip 360 Unethical Experimental to Late Experimental	(←OR→) 360 + ↑ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ Ⓞ TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	4660
Front Flip 360 Experimental to Late Tail Grab	(←OR→) 360 + ↑ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅	◆	4260
Misty 1080 Rocket	(←OR→) 1080 + ↑ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	4740
Rodeo 720 Nose Grab to Late Iffy Stiffy	(←OR→) 720 + ↓ 360 ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅ Ⓞ	◆	4990
Triple Front Flip Method	↑ 1080 ⬅	◆	5800

SMUGGLER'S RUN

Try adding a new slant to your game by floating in midair or becoming invisible...

Sure, splinting gems, guns and human organs across the Canadian border at breakneck speed pursued by the rozzers is not a bad way to pass your time. In fact it's a great way to pass your time. Nevertheless, if you really want to make smuggling as much fun as possible, you need to try out these codes. Pause a game in progress and enter the following key combinations to bring about the some reality bending effects. A sound will confirm that you've entered the codes correctly.

Invisibility

⬅, ⬅x2, ⬅, ⬅x↓, ⬅
Try winning the game when all you can see is your tyre tracks.

Slow Down Time

⬅, ⬅, ⬅, ⬅, ←x3
Just the opposite. Make a handbrake turn between two moving vehicles at 100mph without so much as a wing mirror out of place with the luxury of time moving at a tranquillised snail pace.

No Gravity

⬅, ⬅, ⬅, ⬅, ↑x3
This is insane. Drive around in search of another vehicle then mirror, signal and plough into them. Their gravity is turned off so they'll respond to the impact by spinning off into the air. Drive away, come back and they'll still be floating away into the wide blue yonder. Quite mental.

Fly away. Fly away my pretty. Fly like a bird.



SILPHEED: THE LOST PLANET

All Weapons!

When you're prompted to enter your name input XACALITE. Once you have, a world of effort-free weapon use is yours for the using.

COMPLETE PLAYER'S GUIDE

ZOE

Zoe is a good rider to unlock, with balanced stats for the get go. Worth winning three gold medals for.



Age: 19
Height: 5'5"
Weight: 130lbs
Nationality: American
Blood Type: AB
Riding Style: Boardercross

Trick Name	Button Combination	Difficulty	Trick Points
Indy Air	⬅	●	300
Stalefish Air	⬅	●	300
Tail Grab Air	⬅ ⬅	●	300
Stiffy Air	⬅ ⬅	●	300
Flying Squirrel Air	⬅ ⬅	●	300
Melancholy Air	⬅ ⬅	●	300
Japan Air	⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	300
Experimental Air	⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	300
Tail Wag Air	⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	600
Holy Crail Air	⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	600
Back Flip	⬇ 360	■	1690
540 Japan	[4 OR 6] 540 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	■	1800
720 Spin	(⬅ OR ➡) 720	■	1910
540 Indy	(⬅ OR ➡) 540 TO ⬅	■	1800
Back Flip Japan	⬇ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	■	1980
540 Stiffy	(⬅ OR ➡) 540 TO ⬅ ⬅	■	1820
Front Flip Crail	⬆ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	■	1990
Front Flip	⬆ 360	■	1620
540 Experimental	(⬅ OR ➡) 540 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	■	1940
180 Swiss Cheese	(⬅ OR ➡) 180 TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	■	1210
Back Flip 360 Crail	(⬅ OR ➡) 360 + ⬇ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	2970
720 Gleeeful Melancholy	(⬅ OR ➡) 720 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	2880
Front Flip 180 Sinful Indy	(⬅ OR ➡) 180 + ⬆ 360 ⬅ ⬅	◆	2690
1080 spin	(⬅ OR ➡) 1080	◆	2860
900 Swiss Cheese	(⬅ OR ➡) 900 TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	2880
Front Flip Tail Grab	⬆ 360 ⬅ ⬅	◆	2010
Front Flip 360 Flying Squirrel	(⬅ OR ➡) 360 + 360	◆	3000
900 Spin Tail Wag	(⬅ OR ➡) 900	◆	2980
Back Flip 180 Roast Beef	(⬅ OR ➡) 180 + ⬇ 360 ⬅ ⬅	◆	2540
Back Flip Unethical Experimental	⬇ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	2450
900 Stiffy	(⬅ OR ➡) 900 ⬅ ⬅	◆	3070
Misty	(⬅ OR ➡) 540 + ⬆ 360	◆	3120
900 Skinned Flying Squirrel	(⬅ OR ➡) 900 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	3400
Back Flip 360 Nosebleed Air	(⬅ OR ➡) 360 + ⬇ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	3670
720 Holy Crail Air	(⬅ OR ➡) 720 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	3840
Rodeo	(⬅ OR ➡) 6 540 + ⬇ 360	◆	3120
Rodeo Iffy Stiffy Air	(⬅ OR ➡) 540 + ⬇ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	3720
900 Roast Beef Jerky	(⬅ OR ➡) 900 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	3560
Misty Tail Grab	(⬅ OR ➡) 540 + ⬆ 360 ⬅ ⬅	◆	3550
Front Flip 360 Indy to Late Mute	(⬅ OR ➡) 360 + ⬆ 360 ⬅ TO ⬅	◆	3590
Back Flip 180 Tail Grab to Late Nosebleed	(⬅ OR ➡) 180 + ⬇ 360 ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	4300
1080 Tail Wag to Late Nosebleed	(⬅ OR ➡) 1080 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	5000
Front Flip 360 Method Madness to Late Made In Japan	(⬅ OR ➡) 360 + ⬆ 360 ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	5000
Double Back Flip Skinned Flying Squirrel to Late Indy	⬇ 720 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅	◆	6000
Double Front Flip Iffy Stiffy to Late Stalefish	⬆ 720 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅	◆	6200
Rodeo 900 Experimental to Late Iffy Stiffy air	(⬅ OR ➡) 900 + ⬇ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	6500
Tripped Out 900 Tail Grab	(⬅ OR ➡) 900 + ⬇ 720 ⬅ ⬅	◆	7000
Full On 900 Made In Japan	(⬅ OR ➡) 900 + ⬆ 720 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	7200
Misty 720 Swiss Cheese to Late Gleeeful Melancholy	(⬅ OR ➡) 720 + ⬆ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	7500
Rodeo 720 Nose Grab to Late Made In Japan	(⬅ OR ➡) 720 + ⬇ 360 ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	8400

HIRO

As the only Alpine rider in the game, Hiro becomes the fastest rider once his experience and stats are beefed up. To unlock him, you need to get four gold medals.



Age: 21
Height: 5'5"
Weight: 200lbs
Nationality: Japanese
Blood Type: A+
Riding Style: Alpine

Trick Name	Button Combination	Difficulty	Trick Points
Method Air	⬅	●	300
Nose Grab Air	⬅ ⬅	●	300
Nuclear Air	⬅ ⬅	●	300
Rocket Air	⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	300
Cross Air	⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	300
Sinful Indy Air	⬅ ⬅	●	550
Mean Lein Air	⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	600
Holy Crail Air	⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	600
Cross The Road Air	⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	600
360 Spin	(⬅ OR ➡) 360	●	950
360 Sinful Indy	(⬅ OR ➡) 360 ⬅ ⬅	●	1220
360 Cross	[4 OR 6] 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	1570
180 Made In Japan	[4 OR 6] 180 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	1380
180 Stalefish to Late Mute	[4 OR 6] 180 ⬅ TO ⬅	●	1460
Front Flip Indy	⬆ 360 ⬅	●	1900
360 Flying Squirrel	[4 OR 6] 360 ⬅ ⬅	●	1400
360 Holy Crail	[4 OR 6] 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	1430
360 Cross The Road	[4 OR 6] 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	●	1500
Back Flip	⬇ 360	■	1690
Front Flip	⬆ 360	■	1690
Back Flip Made In Japan	⬇ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	■	2260
540 Nuclear	(⬅ OR ➡) 540 ⬅ ⬅	■	2280
720 Nuclear to Late Mean Lein	(⬅ OR ➡) 720 ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	■	2640
Back Flip 360 Tail Wag to Late Method	(⬅ OR ➡) 360 + ⬇ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅	■	2890
Front Flip Lein	⬆ 360 ⬅ ⬅	■	2140
Back Flip 360	(⬅ OR ➡) 360 + ⬇ 360	■	2640
1080	(⬅ OR ➡) 1080	■	2860
360 Nuclear Reactor	(⬅ OR ➡) 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	■	2320
720 Stalefish	(⬅ OR ➡) 720 ⬅	■	2360
Tail Wag to Late Nosebleed Air	⬅ ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	■	2150
Back Flip 360 Flying Squirrel	(⬅ OR ➡) 360 + ⬇ 360 ⬅ ⬅	■	3130
Front Flip 360 Tail Grab to Late Unethical Experimental	(⬅ OR ➡) 360 + ⬆ 360 ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	■	3450
Front Flip 360 Flying Squirrel to Late Unethical Experimental	⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	■	3620
720 Experimental to Late Holy Crail	(⬅ OR ➡) 720 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	■	3950
Front Flip 360 Method Madness	(⬅ OR ➡) 360 + ⬆ 360 ⬅ ⬅	■	3280
Misty	(⬅ OR ➡) 540 + ⬆ 360	■	3120
Rodeo	(⬅ OR ➡) 540 + ⬇ 360	■	3120
Rodeo 720	(⬅ OR ➡) 720 + ⬇ 360	■	3600
Front Flip Cross The Road	⬆ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	■	3920
Double Back Flip Rocket	⬇ 720 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	3690
Double Back Flip Cross The Road	⬆ 720 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	5140
900 Tail Wag to Late Nosebleed	(⬅ OR ➡) 900 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	5630
Double Front Flip 720 Cross to Late Skinned Flying Squirrel	(⬅ OR ➡) 720 + ⬆ 720 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	7030
Triple Back Flip	⬇ 1080	◆	5700
Rodeo Tail Wag	(⬅ OR ➡) 540 + ⬇ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	4110
Back Flip Nosebleed to Late Tail Wag	⬇ 360 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	4350
Double Front Flip 360 Method Madness	(⬅ OR ➡) 360 + ⬆ 720 ⬅ ⬅	◆	5000
Double Back Flip Cross to Late Nuclear Reactor	⬇ 720 ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	6780
Double Front Flip 720 SINFUL Indy to Late Cross	(⬅ OR ➡) 720 + ⬆ 720 ⬅ ⬅ TO ⬅ ⬅ ⬅	◆	7040
Double Rodeo	(⬅ OR ➡) 1080 + ⬇ 720	◆	6220

ARMoured CORE 2

Enter the war of the robots with a distinct advantage.

Fixed camera view

Hold ⬅ + ⬅ + ⬅ down during gameplay. Release the buttons, and then press ⬅ again.

First person view

Hold ⬅ + ⬅ + ⬅ (again, during gameplay). Release the buttons, then press ⬅ again.
[To return to the default view, just pause the game then press ⬅.]

Add defeated AC emblems

Press ⬅ + ⬅ when the victory

message appears in the arena to add the defeated AC's emblem to your list.

Steal AC emblems

If you see an emblem in the arena that you want to use, select the appropriate AC and press ⬅ to display the spec screen. Then, press ⬅ + ⬅. A sound will confirm correct code entry. Select 'Edit Emblem' to view it.

Temporary invincibility

Press ⬅ + ⬅ + ⬅ (analogue stick). Once done, a 'Limiter Released' system

error message will appear, and you will have unlimited energy for approximately one minute. Once this is done the 'OB Down' system error will appear. It too will last about a minute during which time your mech will not have any energy and will be totally vulnerable to enemy attack. After 'OB Down' is over, your AC will recharge and return to normal. So make sure you neutralise your enemy entirely before you become a large, metal, sitting duck.


Plus cheats

Intentionally lose the first mission after the Raven test, then die with -50,000 credits or less to activate the 'Plus' cheats. The game will restart from the first level with all items gained in the previous game. Your pilot name will vanish from its place in the Pilot Roster. The more you do this, the more cheats you will unlock. Bonuses include an enhanced Radar, faster cooling, the ability to fire rear weapons while mobile and 100% increase in available energy.



Want to start collecting Madden Cards? Help is at hand.

Madden NFL 2001 is a fine game in its own right. However, if you want to open up cheats, stadiums and 'special' teams (Mummies, Monsters and the like) or if you want to open up the game the elbow-grease way, you're going to need to get Madden Cards. The Madden Card system works like this. Complete challenges during a game and you'll win tokens. For every 100 tokens you can buy a pack of 15 Madden Cards. There are 297 in total distributed over seven categories: Current Players, Historic Players, Cheats, Stadiums, Classic Teams, All-Madden Teams and Extra Teams. Each pack can (and will often) contain doubles. What do the cards do? Each one unlocks a corresponding function or cheat.

The majority of Player and Cheat Cards can only be used once, but Stadium, Classic Player and Team Cards will add permanent bonuses to the game. There are also different colours of card (bronze, silver, gold) that give increasing strength, duration and so on depending on the cheat it triggers. You can view your cards in the Card Book option. Flip the Card over (using ) and you'll see four ratings. 'L' corresponds to the number of times you can use the card. 'R' shows the Card's rarity between 1:350 and 1:2000. 'V' indicates the resale value of the Card, and 'P' shows the percentage boost of a Card's cheat where applicable. The Madden Card packs are like Pokémon card packs in that the more Cards you have, the harder it is to fill the gaps in your collection.

To expedite this process you can supplement your token tally by reselling copies of Cards you already have. Since you only need a bronze of any Card to complete a full set it's worth selling your most valuable duplicate when multiples start flooding your collection. That way you get more tokens, more packs and increase your chances of getting a full Madden Card book. And so with all of this in mind, here are the first two levels of tasks with hints on how to complete them.



Lastly, an apology to those who tried unsuccessfully to use the Madden cheat codes from last month. As you may have noticed the codes were from the PSone version of the game. We hope this makes up for it and thanks to those who pointed out the error.



LEVEL 1

Level 1 Tokens (Difficulty: Points Earned)
Rookie: 2, Pro: 4, All-Pro: 6, All-Madden: 8

Level 1 Tasks

Task	Strategy
Make a 40+ yard field goal.	Use Jason Elam of the Denver Broncos.
Punt the ball 50+ yards.	Craig Hentrich of the Titans has a leg of solid gold. Despite this infirmity he can kick like there's no tomorrow.
Hold CPU under 7 points (Minimum duration of quarter: Four minutes).	Play Cincinnati or Arizona and you'll make your life a whole lot easier.
Score 21 points in a game (Maximum quarter duration [MQD]: Six minutes).	Play as the Rams. Simple.
One reception by three different players	The Rams, Vikings and the Green Bay Packers all have great receiver partnerships.
Throw two touchdown passes with one player.	Try using Kurt Warner of the Rams.
Gain 200 yards of total offense.	You need a balance of rushing and passing attacks. The Rams, Colts and Titans are a good bet.
Complete five consecutive passes.	Use Peyton Manning (Indianapolis Colts) or Brett Favre (Green Bay) here.
Complete a 30 yard pass.	Jeff Blake (New Orleans Saints), Brett Favre (Green Bay) and Kurt Warner (St Louis Rams) all have unfeasibly powerful arms.
No dropped passes all game (MQD: Four minutes).	The Rams, Colts and Jacksonville Jaguars are all largely fumble-free.
No offensive fumbles all game (MQD: Four minutes).	The Denver Broncos, Atlanta Falcons or Rams are all safe bets.
No interceptions thrown all game (MQD: Four minutes).	Play with Peyton Manning (Colts) or Kurt Warner (Rams) at the helm.
No sacks (Quarterback tackled behind starting point allowed all game [Minimum QD: Four minutes]).	St Louis, Indianapolis and Jacksonville have the best lines.
Defeat the '99 Titans at Tennessee in the rain.	Take 'em on with the St Louis Rams or Indianapolis Colts.
Defeat the Colts at RCA Dome.	Get stuck in with the Jets, Rams or Dolphins as your side.
Recover a fumble on defense.	Use your  /  buttons to attempt a strip of the ball.
Intercept a pass on defense.	The Dolphins and Redskins have some of the best Defensive Backs out there.
Sack the opposing Quarterback.	Jevon Kearse (Tennessee Titans) and Junior Seau (San Diego Chargers) are all you need to get this job done.
Get three tackles with one player.	This will almost always happen during the course of a game.

LEVEL 2






Level 2 Tokens (Difficulty: Points Earned)
Rookie: 3, Pro: 6, All-Pro: 9, All-Madden: 12

Level 2 Tasks










Task	Strategy
30 Yard Kick-off Returner average for one player (Minimum returns: Two).	Go with Desmond Howard (Green Bay Packers) or Brian Mitchell (Philadelphia Eagles) to make this easy.
30 Yard Punt Returner average for one player (Minimum returns: Two).	Who's the man? Deion Sanders (Washington Redskins) is the man.
Score 42 points in a game (MQD: Six minutes).	You need a very powerful offense to get this. May we recommend the Rams, Titans or Jaguars?
Defeat CPU by 28 points (MQD: Six minutes).	Try the Vikings versus the Bears.
10 yard Rush average for one player (Minimum attempts needed: Five).	Use Corey Dillon (Cincinnati Bengals), Eddie George (Titans) or Ricky Williams (Saints) and collect the tokens.
Gain 100 receiving yards with one player.	Just make sure that Antonio Freeman (Green Bay), Joey Galloway (Dallas Cowboys) or Randy Moss (Minnesota Vikings) are on the receiving end of the throw.
Catch two touchdown passes with one player.	Make your life easier by getting Cris Carter (Vikings) or Keyshawn Johnson (Tampa Bay Buccaneers) to receive.
20 yard receiving average for one player (Minimum number of receptions: Three).	Throw deep to Wayne Chrebet (New York Jets), Randy Moss (Vikings) or Carl Pickens (Titans) and you'll be okay.
Score three rushing touchdowns with one player.	Entrust Emmitt Smith (Cowboys), Terrell Davis (Denver Broncos) or Ricky Williams (Saints) with the mission.
Throw for 300 yards with just one player.	Kurt Warner (Rams) or Brett Favre (Packers) are your best bets here.
Throw four touchdown passes with one player.	When the ball flies make sure it's just left either Kurt Warner (Rams) or Daunte Culpepper's (Vikings).
Complete 80% of your passes.	Turn back time, use either the 1990 San Francisco 49ers, '97 St Louis Rams or Green Bay Packers and you won't go far wrong.
Complete ten consecutive passes.	It's that Kurt Warner (Rams) again. Either him, or Vinny Testaverde (Jets).
Commit no penalties in a game (Minimum quarter duration: Four minutes).	There is no sure fire way of getting this, but try to lay off tackling receivers before they catch the ball. With this in mind, don't use the Oakland Raiders.
Defeat the '72 Dolphins with a regular team.	The Titans have a good mix of defensive and offensive players.
Record two sacks with one player.	You could do a whole lot worse than Kearse (Tennessee Titans), Butler (Green Bay Packers) or Warren Sapp (Tampa Bay Buccaneers).
Force three turnovers (loss of possession) in one game on defense.	The Saints, Dolphins, Redskins and Baltimore Ravens are good choices.
Record five tackles with two different players.	Give the Buccaneers the mission.
Hold CPU under 150 total off yards (Minimum quarter duration: Four minutes).	CPU: Cardinals or Cleveland Browns. You: Buccaneers or Ravens.

SSX






Codes-a-go-go!

To make these little info-nuggets work, first press  at the character selection screen to access the options menu. Then, HOLD  +  +  +  and enter the code as it appears below. If you've done it right, you'll hear a sound as confirmation.






Master code

Can't wait to try out the Untracked course? Want to see Zoe's fourth costume? Tap in the following:
   
    
Now you have all courses, players, boards, and costumes unlocked and at your disposal.

Running mode.



Like playing Track And Field but love SSX? Tap in the following:
    
Your racer will now run down the courses with their board on their back. It's well worth a good butchers.



Full Attributes.

To max out your racer's attributes without resorting to actually winning anything, enter the following:
 x5,    



TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT

Choose yourself a stage in Practice mode. Kicking ass is all the more pleasurable when you can choose a charming backdrop. To do this, choose Practice mode from the main menu then hold  and  - press the number of times listed below for the corresponding stage.

Stage	 presses	Stage	 presses
Law (new)	1	King	11
Yoshimitsu (light snow)	2	Heihachi	12
Ling	3	Eddy (daytime)	13
Hwoarang	4	Unknown	14
Lei	5	Law (old)	15
Ogre	6	School Stage (daytime)	16
School Stage (evening)	7	Jin (daytime)	17
Jin (evening)	8	Nina (night time)	18
Nina (daytime)	9	Yoshimitsu (heavy snow)	19
Eddy (sunset)	10	Paul	20

THE SIMPLE PLEASURES

While all you lucky tykes were eating festive pies, opening presents and dancing round trees festooned with chocolate and pretty coloured lights, I was hard at work searching for new additions to my leather-bound volume of tips. It wasn't all work and no play though. My one day of happiness was undoubtedly when the whole OPS2 team clubbed together to buy me a splendid spinning top, which I play with between bouts of PS2 dredging. The dear little toy gives me no end of pleasure. Next month expect more SSX, an Orphen walkthrough and 'spinning top tactics'. Mr Fitz, Hardcore, Official PlayStation 2 Magazine, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW. Alternatively, email me at PS2@futurenet.co.uk.



Welcome to our second Q&A session, lovingly prepared to help you with your PS2-related dilemmas and queries. Need an answer? Write to us at HardCore Q&A at the usual address, or send an email to us at PS2@futurenet.co.uk.

PATRIOT GAMES

I bought OPS2 Issue #01 and it was great, it informs me in detail about all the new games and other stuff... When I read one article (Page 93) 'We are Family' on the top-right side... One sentence caught my eye, "In short, buy British." Question 1. How do we identify which type of PlayStation 2 console they are? Whether it is the Japanese, American or the British model? Question 2. Are the games of PSone playable on PlayStation 2?

Jonathan Tiong, via email

1. There are two ways to narrow down the designated region of your PS2. From the front, the models all look the same, but turn your machine around. Firstly, look to the left of the cooling fan and you'll see a covered slot. This is where the Japanese machine will house its modem and the UK/US machines will hold their combined Hard Disk Drive/broadband modem. If the slot is small (approximately 1cm by 5cm) then you're looking at a Japanese model. If the slot is larger (approximately 4cm by 12.5cm) then it's either a US or UK model. Now look above the slot. On the upper left of PS2's backside you'll see some manufacturer's text. Amongst this there are some boxed sections of type (look for the black print on the white box). If

the letters PAL are visible, then you have a UK designated machine. If the letters NTSC and J or USA are there you're looking at a foreign model. 2. Around 98% of them are. Not only that but you can use PS2's enhanced processing power to smooth out some of the 'jaggies' (visibly pixelated lines) you find in PSone (PlayStation 1) titles. To do this boot up PS2 without a game disc in. When prompted press **△** to select 'System Configuration'. Then highlight 'PlayStation Driver' and press **△** again. From the available options select 'Texture Mapping' and press **Ⓢ** as prompted. Activate the 'Smooth' option and make your way back to the launch screen. Then all you have to do is put your PSone disc in and wait for PS2 to locate and launch it. Do not reset the machine to speed things up because it will also undo everything you've just done. Now, depending on your choice of PSone game you'll notice a hitherto unachievable smoothness of line. Not at all bad.

LEADING QUESTION

I have been looking all over the UK for a PS2 digital out lead, and I can't find one. Do you know where I can buy one? The digital out lead is for me to connect to my Digital AV Amplifier Sony STR-DB940 for the superb audio with an Immersive surround sound experience.

Alex Gillespie, via email

The good news is that you don't need a specialist PS2 optical lead to connect it to a digital AV amp. Any optical/optical audio lead from a good hi-fi store should work just fine.

WOOZY BLUES

One of the first games I bought for my PlayStation2 was TimeSplitters. I was very impressed, but after an hour of playing I noticed a headache coming on which got worse and worse the more I played. In the end I had to stop as the pain was too much. I haven't suffered from motion sickness in almost ten years but I recognised the symptoms as being the same. I have got used to it now but I just wanted to know whether this type of thing is common or do you think it will start to appear more often now that games become closer to reality than anything we have seen before?

Paul Cowley, Southport

Tolerance to rapid movement in videogames varies from person to person but if you have suffered from motion sickness in the past, the kind of rapidly shifting perspective that you find in first-person games, be they shoot-'em-ups or racers, may provoke a similar side effect if the game is played for long periods. When it comes to visual stimuli, the better the game or simulator portrays physical movement the greater its potential to bring about ill effects. So arguably it has much to do with the speed of the graphics than it does the reality of what is being portrayed. The key here is to shorten the uninterrupted time you spend in front of the screen, and that applies even if you don't have a tendency to suffer from motion sickness. Game manuals often suggest taking a breather every 45 minutes to an hour or so. However, if playing a game makes you nauseous, dizzy or affects your vision then you really should go and see your GP.

FRIENDS LIKE THESE...

I took my PS2 to work for the guys to have a play on, but when I got it back it wouldn't play DVDs. A friend told me later that some of them had

OPENED IT UP! One guy says that he can get it to work if he had the right wavelength for the resistors that are on the back of the DVD laser. Can you help?

Derek Matthews, via email

Yes. First of all change your friends. No. Get them to cough up for professional repairs, then change them. Whoever took it upon themselves to lift the lid on your pride and joy has invalidated the warranty. The best thing to do is find out exactly what the 'guys' did, then call Sony's Careline on 0990 998 877. Tell them what has happened and let them guide you, using a qualified technician. Whatever you do, don't let anyone do any further destructive fiddling.

BASIC PROGRAMS

Your Postal page on the first issue of OPS2 got me thinking. You mentioned the future of PS2, its peripherals and so on, however you missed out on something that may become extremely interesting very quickly. I am referring to the inclusion of 'Basic' on the demo disc. From what I have seen, this Basic is what Net Yaroze users forked out for some time ago, albeit possibly in a cut down form.

I also remember the last few months Official PlayStation Magazine had some Yaroze games on their demo discs, including some which far surpass most full price games. The seemingly minor inclusion of Basic for all PS2 users may turn out to create a whole new generation of 'Yaroze's'.

Therefore with that in mind, how about a brief tutorial in your mag on how to get started with Basic?

Simon Norris, Wolverhampton

For those who don't know their Yaroze from their Yazoo here's a quick primer. Net Yaroze was Sony's attempt to harness the enthusiasm and developing skills of bedroom programmers worldwide. For approximately £500 you could buy a special, black, multi-region friendly PSone and PC development kit and link the two machines. It was basically a scaled down version of the dev kit used by games developers that still required users to have a fairly good knowledge of the C++ programming language. Amateur programmers could then upload their games to a Sony site (hence the 'Net') and share their expertise - like an incubator for future talent.

Now we have PS2 and the similarly titled Yabasic, but it's not quite the same thing. Over to the Yabasic (short for Yet Another BASIC) Project Team Leader at Sony, Mike Dean, "Yabasic for PlayStation 2 caters for the opposite end of the spectrum to Net Yaroze, and is intended to be an introductory language, teaching the basics of programming. Unlike Net Yaroze, users can program a PlayStation 2 out-of-the-box.

"It doesn't connect to an external PC or require any additional peripherals to be useful, though it can make use of USB keyboards if present (replacing the slightly cumbersome virtual keyboard) and can save and load programs to PS2 Memory Cards. While its functionality is more limited than Net Yaroze, it should be much quicker and easier to get working programs up on screen."

Your best bet for help with Yabasic on PS2 is Sony's own Web site (www.playstation-basic.com). It's in its infancy, so if you can't wait to get programming take a look at the original version of Yabasic's site (www.Yabasic.de). Since the PS2 version is a port of this Unix/Windows version you'll find a lot of useful information here. □



THE WHAT PLACE?

Since David Lynch's characteristically 'you what?' interpretation of PS2 as gateway to 'The Third Place' we've had a number of calls for clarification. Lynch's ad was dissected in OPS2 #03, but here's a brief recap if you missed it.

The Third Place is not, as one of you wags suggested, where Sony envisages PS2's ranking behind Xbox and GameCube. To paraphrase both Sony and TBWA's Trevor Beattie, The Third Place is neither work nor home, but a space that we are free to define. A place in our lives that is filled with possibilities, where activities are chosen by us, rather than dictated to us. In other words, it's where you go and what you do to relax. The Third Place is different for everyone, so don't fret. Unless you're David Lynch you don't have to hang out with gimps and ducks in penguin suits. Unless you want to.

ENDGAME

Opinion/gossip/lists/columns/truths/lies/odds/sods/and some stuff you write

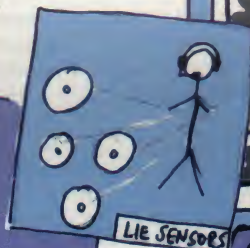
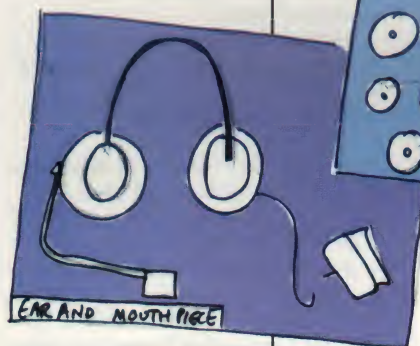
Designer Genes

Got an idea for a game? Then let us know about it. This month's Designer Genes features lie detector peripherals and mistruths. Are you a good liar?

There are not many games that expect you to mislead every character you come across. Deception is different.

1. A rundown of who you are likely to meet next.
2. Timer. All meetings are timed.
3. Special Tricks: Shows accumulated bribes and blackmail.
4. Shows who you are talking to and what intelligence they are.
5. A visual display of how well you are doing.
6. The character.

PERIPHERALS NEEDED



#4: DECEPTION

Designed by: James Ashby, Woolwich



"Have you ever been forced to lie yourself out of a tricky situation? How convincing do you think you were? Are you a professional or shamefaced amateur? Deception is your chance to prove yourself. Incorporating both voice recognition and lie detector technology, this game pits you against the power of the PS2 as you attempt to weedle your way out of the most awkward situations the 128 bit processor can throw at you. By your talking to characters in the game the PS2 is able to decide how feasible your lies are, and through lie detector sensors detects how tense or nervous you are.

"At the start of each level you are presented with a situation in FMV in which you are either innocent, guilty or a mixture

of both, of a crime, mishap or compromising situation. There is a punishment – either corporal, capital or emotional – if you are proved guilty by the relevant party involved. This could be the police, your boss or a friend. You are then presented with a variety of characters who will question you. You must convince them that you are innocent. Even if you aren't.

"In each level you are expected to hold your story as best you can. If you change it a character may be quick-witted enough to see holes, but they may not as their AI is variable. You may also be able to bribe or blackmail in later stages. The final level involves the ultimate test – trying to lie to your mother. The end sequence features a CGI of other famous liars including Richard Nixon and other politicians."

LIE, LIE, LIE

Here are some examples of possible predicaments:

- ☐ Caught in bed with your best mate's girlfriend.
- ☐ Accused of poisoning the whole of your office's coffee.
- ☐ Accidentally causing a nuclear meltdown.

THE EXPERT'S OPINION



PAUL GLANCEY
Creative Manager of Criterion Studios, maker of *Shiny Red Car*.

Well, I think this is the best game idea I've ever heard. Bzzzt! Oops, there goes my high score. No, only kidding. It's great. Who would be programmer enough to make the PS2 be able to distinguish between lies and somebody just being sarcastic? If your mate said he had a high score, how would you know whether he was lying or not? If he was a great liar he could lie about having a high score, but if he was lying he would probably be so good at the game that he would have a high score anyway and... so... Does society need a game that breeds such mistrust and confusion? I say no!

WRITE TO:
Designer Genes,
Official PlayStation 2
Magazine, Future
Publishing, 30
Monmouth Street,
Bath BA1 2BW. Or
email
PS2@futurenet.co.uk.
Please try to keep
your designs within
the 250 word limit,
and don't forget to
include big colourful
drawings to bring your
words to life. Prizes to
be won!



Getting hands-on with **Metal Gear Solid 2**, shooting enemies in the back with stun darts, dragging them into empty lockers and realising that all the hype is justified for once.

Playing **Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec's** Rally mode in first-person with dirt blowing in your face the whole way around the circuit. Eat this McRael

Arguing over who **Lou's** baby should be named after.

The Bouncer's prince of ponce Dauragon C Mikado. And his camp cyborg crony PD-4 who looks like Phil Oakey circa *Don't You Want Me?* Baby.

The happy world of **Haribo** fizzy sweets. And those burgers!

FEVER

OPS2ometer

What's hot, what's not, what's out there...

CHILL

All the stuff that has gone wrong this month because **everyone's** been ill/on holiday/drunk/hungover.

Rain, snow, sleet, ice, gale force winds and the generally inclement climate of **Britain in January**. Mental note: book four-week holiday to Cuba this time next year. Just like Moyler.



Sefton beating everyone at **Unreal Tournament** because he had the game at his house for weeks and refused to let anyone else have a go.

Not being able to play Wu-Tang, OutKast, Nelly, Lyricist Lounge or any other boss hip-hop records in the office in case it disturbs **Lou's** baby.

Colds, flu, sore throats, snotty noses, coughs and all other manifestations of the **British climate**.

Sky Surfer.



Insider Job

It's not all big name developers, you know... OPS2's guide to the people who make the games we love.

NAME	Karl Hilton	AGE	30	#2
OFFICIAL JOB TITLE	Art Director Free Radical Design			

Questions	Answers
What games have you worked on and what did you do on them?	GoldenEye, I was the main background artist and also worked on some of the front end. Perfect Dark, I was Lead Artist on the project until I left Rare. I was responsible for a lot of the backgrounds you see in the final game. I am Art Director on TimeSplitters which means I keep an eye on all the graphical elements of the game such as backgrounds, character design and animation.
How did you get started with drawing, designing and so on?	Initially I did O- and then A-level in Art and then went off to university to study architecture. I have always had a strong interest in design, whether it is for buildings, cars or products in general, but architecture seemed one of the most interesting and accessible areas to study.
How did you get into the videogame industry?	While completing an architecture course I started specialising in CAD (Computer Aided Design). During a year out I missed my computers. I began looking around for courses and eventually found and was accepted on the Computer Visualisation and Animation course at Bournemouth University.
What was your first job?	My first job, in the industry, was with Rare. After spending a few weeks learning Alias I ended up doing a few promotional renders for various games before starting work on GoldenEye.
What got you involved in games?	As a kid, I grew up playing all the first 8-bit games on computers like the Spectrum, Atari 800 and Commodore 64.
Who are your heroes?	In the games world I am impressed by anyone who can produce a really exciting experience. I particularly like racing games, so I would have to say the GT and WipeOut series are my favourites. My favourite directors are Ridley Scott, Luc Besson and Richard Stanley. In art I like Lichtenstein, Rothko and Mondrian because their art is simple yet dramatic. I have always believed that design in any field should be clean, pure and through these qualities elegance is derived.
What's the best videogame art you've seen?	Overall I was really impressed by Metal Gear Solid on PSone. It had a design purity and consistency that I really admired.
What do you reckon of the standard of art in games at the moment?	The biggest constraint on art in videogames is the performance of the system you work on. However, this can never be an excuse for poor graphics. As game systems become more powerful, with each new generation, it potentially becomes easier to produce impressive graphics, but the most important element will always be having people who are prepared to put in the time and effort.
What's the best thing about your job?	Working with highly talented people with an extremely diverse range of skills and seeing it all come together. Seeing your game on the shop shelves and hearing that people are enjoying playing it. Getting a royalty cheque occasionally.
And the worst aspects about the job?	Trying to get highly-talented people with an extremely diverse range of skills to understand what each other are talking about. Attempting to keep control over your game once it has gone out of the studio door. Seeing credits and royalties not distributed fairly or to those who deserve them.

You Got It Wrong, Son!

Do you think we've unfairly reviewed a game? Think you know better than us? Then tell us about it here.

David Low, Ilford

DOA2 is nothing but eye candy. It lacks the depth, skill and playability that Tekken Tag or Street Fighter both have.

The control system of DOA2 is simply appalling. The block button is also used in side stepping, which is ludicrous as you will have no time to execute that in a match and will result in the opponent pulverising you. Which brings me to the next point. The combo system consists of only a punch and a kick which means a string of combos and be easily achieved by hammering the two buttons furiously. Consequently, a beginner can easily beat an expert.

The reversal is also an annoying factor. The fact that the computer does it at regular intervals, and the fact that you can't really 'reverse' the reversal



DOA2

The gaming public is again divided. This time about fighting games. Is Dead or Alive 2 the best beat-'em-up or does Tekken Tag Tournament knock it out of the ring? You decide.

Geoff Spacman, Crewe

I think that your DOA2 reviewer is missing the point over what the game is trying to achieve. It's not supposed to be comparable to Tekken Tag Tournament. It's a completely different concept.

Where Tekken is all about perfecting your combos and achieving that elusive

Elevenstring, DOA2 is for the rest of the gameplaying fraternity who can't be bothered with fancy move lists and just want fast moving graphics and a bit of mindless button hitting violence. The only thing Tekken has which is comparable in terms of fun is Tekken Bowl.

DOA2 has some lovely graphical touches which Tekken doesn't, like the 3D playing arenas and the way the screen blurs when you are losing against the end of level boss. All this adds up to a massively enjoyable adrenaline fest which not only looks great but is also easy to pick up and play. All that, and you get the chance to beat the nloke who's better than you at Tekken...

Graphics 09/Sound 07/
Gameplay 09/Life span 08/
Overall 09

WRITE TO

You Got It Wrong, Son!, Official PlayStation 2 Magazine, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Or email PS2@futurenet.co.uk. Prizes to be won!

makes playing the game frustrating in one-player mode. A fighting game should rely on skill and skill alone. DOA2 ignores this and reduces it to just a question of how fast you can hit the buttons.

Graphics 08/Sound 04/
Gameplay 04/Life span 04/
Overall 05

Brainstorm

164 pages of PS2 in handy blipvert form... Follow the page numbers to see what you've missed.

"It's fun to be scared, don't you think?" p.40

"All around, man-sized statues of ape creatures glower menacingly" p.78

"Can I go now?" p.117

"Vomit On A Lunar Year" p.144

"More like Cack Attack" p.121

"Experts in the art of torture could not have found a better way to sap your will to live" p.122

"Different themes such as 'Day Time', 'Night Time' and 'Psychedelic Vietnam Flashback'..." p.66

"Please make me clean because I always want to be clean. Sometimes" p.132

"A snarling Jim Davidson suddenly lurches forward clutching a chainsaw and wearing what appears to be a butcher's apron made from jagged plate metal" p.100

"Jump trains, hijack aircraft and launch a space shuttle..." p.21

"Tyrant captures artefact/princess. Anime peasant boy with ambiguous gender sets out to rescue artefact/princess with a motley band of adventurers to help him along the way. Artefact/princess is saved. Sun sets, kisses all round, put joypad down, go to pub, then flog game down the market the following weekend" p.108

"We can't import pencils because Iraq will use the lead for bullets - that sort of thing" p.64

"Kiss the poster of a semi-clad lady displayed on the inside of the door. Right" p.55

"Front Flip Swiss Cheese to Late Fresh Stalemaskey" p.134

"Radical Dismantling of the Mechanics of Capitalism and Establishment of a New Anarchist World Order" p.66

"Chances are you're either dying of dehydration and your baking brain is hallucinating or you're on a press trip..." p.96

"Rocket Dive's Hide With Spread Beavers being a dubious favourite" p.72

ILLUSTRATION: MR JACO

The Quiz

It was so popular last time... okay that's a lie, but we enjoyed making it. So here's another OPS2 Quiz. No prizes, just glory.



NICE AND EASY

The answer's in the question. Or at least somewhere in this issue.

1. Who plays arch-villain Powell in the *Tomb Raider* movie?
2. The embassy of which country quashed rumours they were importing PS2s for military use?
3. Which football game allows you to shout commands to your players?
4. Which top DJ has provided an Ibiza mix for the first D-Rom club compilation DVD?
5. Who is the CEO of the Mikado Group?

DRAGON TEAR HUMAN

Which, rearranged, is *The Anagram Round*. Do some rearranging of your own to reveal the game names.

1. VomIt On A Lunar Year
2. Save Or Upset Bum
3. Furry Kess
4. Cure The Nob
5. If Glasgow Yawn

MOVIEWATCH

Fodder for budding Barry Normans.

1. Who is Tim Allen's Commander in *Galaxy Quest*?

2. The Russian Roulette scene at the conclusion of *The Beach* is a reference to which Seventies movie?
3. *Virgin Sulcides* director Sofia Coppola is married to which indie film director?
4. Who first shoots Mr Orange (Tim Roth) in *Reservoir Dogs*?
5. "You're so money and you don't even know it." The film?

STARRING IN...

Five characters, five games. You guess the latter.

1. Moby
2. Kou Lelfoh
3. Aryss
4. Elke Kusch
5. Flece

TRUE OR FALSE

50-50. Toss of a coin. Six of one, half a dozen of the other. You get the idea.

1. *Grand Theft Auto 3* will be set in New York City.
2. In *SSX*, there's a cheat that allows you to run down slopes instead of 'boarding'.
3. The motion capture in *FIFA 2001* was provided by Stan Collymore.
4. The lead character in *Resident Evil Code: Veronica X* will be Jill Valentine.
5. The online PC RPG *Everquest* is produced by a company owned by Sony.

METAL GEAR MIX-UP

These *Metal Gear Solid* characters have all got the wrong surnames. Right this grievous wrong.

1. Sniper Ocelot
2. Vulcan Snake
3. Psycho Raven
4. Revolver Wolf
5. Liquid Mantis

SAM'S SAD KONAMI QUIZ PART 2

Our Dep Ed returns to test your knowledge of the various Konami studios and the games they make.

1. *Silent Hill 2*
2. *Ephemeral Fantasia*
3. *ZOE*
4. *Ring Of Red*
5. *Beatmania*

PC OR NOT PC?

Which of the following PS2 games originally appeared on the PC?

1. *Unreal Tournament*
2. *Kessen*
3. *TimeSplitters*
4. *Theme Park World*
5. *Armoured Core 2*

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

You really shouldn't know the answers to this lot.

1. Who created *PaRappa The Rapper* and *Vib Ribbon*?
2. Tokyo Megaplex is the course. What's the game?
3. What is the name of the book Reiji Asakura wrote about Ken Kutaragi and the rise of PlayStation?
4. In which city is developer Crystal Dynamics based?
5. In what year was the Commodore 64 home computer launched?

ANSWERS (USE A MIRROR)

Nice and Easy
1. Christopher Moltisanti
2. Italy
3. *Lost in Translation*
4. *Reservoir Dogs*
5. *Boyz n the City*

Sam's Sad Konami Quiz Part 2
1. *Silent Hill 2*
2. *Ephemeral Fantasia*
3. *ZOE*
4. *Ring Of Red*
5. *Beatmania*

PC or Not PC?
1. *Unreal Tournament*
2. *Kessen*
3. *TimeSplitters*
4. *Theme Park World*
5. *Armoured Core 2*

Mission Impossible
1. *PaRappa The Rapper* and *Vib Ribbon*
2. *Tokyo Megaplex*
3. *PaRappa The Rapper*
4. *Crystal Dynamics*
5. *1982*

q-u-x-i-m
1. *Unreal Tournament*
2. *Kessen*
3. *TimeSplitters*
4. *Theme Park World*
5. *Armoured Core 2*

q-u-x-i-m
1. *Unreal Tournament*
2. *Kessen*
3. *TimeSplitters*
4. *Theme Park World*
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1. *Unreal Tournament*
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4. *Theme Park World*
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q-u-x-i-m
1. *Unreal Tournament*
2. *Kessen*
3. *TimeSplitters*
4. *Theme Park World*
5. *Armoured Core 2*



YOUR RATING

- 35-46 Title Winners
25-35 European Place
15-25 Mid-table
0-15 Relegated

Want to know more? Need to know a release date? What about a game in the future? Something gone wrong? Here's all the info you could ever need...

3DO 01895 456 700
www.3doeurope.com
3DO Europe, 21-23 Mossop St, London SW3 2LY
ACCLAIM 0207 344 5000
www.acclaimnation.com
112-120 Brompton Rd, Knightsbridge, London SW3 1JJ

ACTIVISION 01895 456 789
www.activision.com
Long Island House, Suite 3a, 1-4 Marple Way, London, W3 0RQ

CODEMASTERS 01926 814 132
www.codemasters.com
Stoneythorpe, Southam, Warwickshire CV33 0DL

CRAVE 00353 617 020
www.cravegames.com
58, Canalot Studios, 222 Kensal Rd, London W10 5BN

CRYO 0121 250 5072
www.cryo-interactive.com
186a Stratford Rd, Shirley, Solihull B90 3BQ

DISNEY INTERACTIVE 0990 998 877
www.disney.co.uk
PlayStation Careline, PO Box 2047, London W1A 3DN

EIDOS INTERACTIVE 0121 356 0831
www.eidos.co.uk
1 Hartfield Rd, Wimbledon, London SW19 3RU

ELECTRONIC ARTS 0870 243 2435
www.ea.com
2000 Hillside Drive, Chertsey, Surrey KT16 0EU

EMPIRE 0800 783 0156
www.empire.co.uk
The Spire, 677 High Rd, North Finchley N12 0DA

FOX INTERACTIVE 01932 454 032
www.foxinteractive.com
2000 Hillside Drive, Chertsey, Surrey KT16 0EU

INFOGRAMES 0208 222 9700
www.infogrames.com
116 Baker St, London W1M 1LB

JVC INTERACTIVE 0207 240 3121
www.jvc.com
44 Wellington St, Covent Garden, London WC2E 7BD

KONAMI 0208 582 5573
www.konami-europe.com
7/9 The Oaks, Ruislip, Middlesex HA4 7LF

LEGO 01753 495 453
www.lego.com
33 Bath Rd, Slough, Berks SL1 3UF

MICROIDS 0208 901 7388
www.microids.com
2 Gayton Rd, Harrow, London HA1 2XU

MIDAS INTERACTIVE 01223 522 000
www.midas-interactive.co.uk
Matrix House, Cambridge Business Park CB4 0HH

MIDWAY 0207 938 4488
www.midway.com
96 Kensington High St, London W8 4SG

SCEE 0990 998 877
www.playstation-europe.com
PlayStation Careline, PO Box 2047, London, W1A 3DN

SCI 0207 585 3308
www.scl.co.uk
11 Ivory House, Plantation Wharf, York Rd, London SW11 3TN

TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE 0870 124 2222
www.take2games.com
Saxon House, 2-4 Victoria St, Windsor, Berks, SL4 1BY

THQ 01483 767 656
www.thq.com
Dukes Court, Duke St, Woking, Surrey GU21 5BH

UBI SOFT 0208 944 9000
www.ubiisoft.co.uk
1 Weir Rd, Wimbledon, London SW19 8UX

VIRGIN INTERACTIVE 0207 551 4222
www.vie.co.uk
74A Charlotte St, London W1P 1LR

SPOT THE BALL



The Shortlist

If it's for PS2, and on sale in the UK then we've played it, argued about it and played it some more. Our potted judgements begin below.



AQUA AQUA: WETRIX 2.0

□ Publisher: **SCI**
□ Developer: **Zed Two**
Addictive, well-realised take on the familiar *Wetrix* puzzle game formula. Build up landscapes and fill them with the water that falls from the sky.
Reviewed **Issue #01**
Players **1-4**
Graphics **06**/Sound **07**
Gameplay **08**/Life span **07**
Overall 07

DEAD OR ALIVE 2

□ Publisher: **SCEE**
□ Developer: **Tecmo**
Graphically superior to *Tekken* and with a more strategy-based gameplay, *DOA2*'s appeal lies in its open arenas and blistering frame rate. Sadly, a lack of characters and newbie-unfriendly gameplay will keep *DOA2* a cult hit.
Reviewed **Issue #02**
Players **1-4**
Graphics **08**/Sound **04**
Gameplay **08**/Life span **06**
Overall 07

DISNEY'S DINOSAUR

□ Publisher: **Ubi Soft**
□ Developer: **Ubi Soft**
A poor, and seemingly rushed spin-off of the movie of the same name. Even the kids will tire of this very quickly – don't inflict it on them, dad!
Reviewed **Issue #03**
Players **1**
Graphics **03**/Sound **05**
Gameplay **04**/Life span **03**
Overall 04

DRAGON'S LAIR

□ Publisher: **Digital Leisure**
□ Developer: **Cinematronics**
Only those nostalgic for the identical 17-year-old arcade title will want to play this, slow, unresponsive, repetitive and with dated animation.
Reviewed **Issue #03**
Players **1**
Graphics **03**/Sound **02**
Gameplay **02**/Life span **01**
Overall 02

DRAGON'S LAIR II: TIMEWARP

□ Publisher: **Digital Leisure**
□ Developer: **Cinematronics**
A more painful gameplay experience than its predecessor, although the graphics are vastly improved. Still – this is a crime conversion onto DVD and should have stayed on the LaserDisc from which it was converted.
Reviewed **Issue #03**
Players **1**
Graphics **03**/Sound **01**
Gameplay **01**/Life span **01**
Overall 01

DYNASTY WARRIORS 2

□ Publisher: **Midas Interactive**
□ Developer: **Tecmo**
Dynasty Warriors 2 mixes strategy with sword slashing as you command armies across the rice fields of 3rd Century China. Slightly repetitive gameplay and some very questionable AI don't stop this game hinting at the future of PS2 gaming with its impressive battle scenes allowing up to 40 fighters on-screen at a time.
Reviewed **Issue #02**
Players **1**
Graphics **08**/Sound **08**
Gameplay **07**/Life span **06**
Overall 07

ESPN INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD

□ Publisher: **Konami**
□ Developer: **KCEO**
Graphically impressive multi-part athletics sim. Features ten different events including an extremely enjoyable Rhythmic Gymnastics level. A simplistic and uninspiring control system spoil what might have been a right corker.
Reviewed **Issue #01**
Players **1-4**
Graphics **09**/Sound **07**
Gameplay **05**/Life span **04**
Overall 07

ESPN WINTER X-GAMES SNOWBOARDING

□ Publisher: **Konami**
□ Developer: **KCEO**
Overly realistic snowboarding sim, hampered by bland graphics, dull courses, and sedate, unresponsive controls. There's some depth to be found if you persevere though, and it does manage to provide a substantial one-player experience.
Reviewed **Issue #01**
Players **1-5**
Graphics **06**/Sound **05**
Gameplay **05**/Life span **07**
Overall 06

F1 CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON 2000

□ Publisher: **EA Sports**
□ Developer: **EA/Visual Sciences**
One of the first Formula One games to make it off the PS2 starting grid. It has good attention to detail but it offers nothing additional to previous incarnations. Its relatively easy control system will probably disappoint the racing game hardcore.
Reviewed **Issue #03**
Players **1-4** (22 in Time Trial)
Graphics **07**/Sound **05**
Gameplay **06**/Life span **06**
Overall 06

FANTAVISION

□ Publisher: **SCEE**
□ Developer: **SCEI**
An interesting oddity – it is the world's first fireworks game. Highly original, *Fantavision* is a puzzler that encourages you to link and detonate chains of ascending fireworks.
Reviewed **Issue #01**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **08**/Sound **07**
Gameplay **08**/Life span **05**
Overall 07

FIFA 2001

□ Publisher: **EA Sports**
□ Developer: **EA Sports (Canada)**
Unfortunately, all the arguments against FIFA from previous incarnations still apply – all mouth, no trousers. Graphics score a hat-trick but with second division gameplay.
Reviewed **Issue #02**
Players **1-4**
Graphics **10**/Sound **09**
Gameplay **05**/Life span **05**
Overall 07

GRADIUS III & IV

□ Publisher: **Konami**
□ Developer: **KCEI**
Pointless reprise of 2D, side-scrolling spaceship shoot-'em-up from before the dawn of time. Or 1990, as we know it. Tedious, poorly ported and of minority interest only.
Reviewed **Issue #01**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **02**/Sound **03**
Gameplay **03**/Life span **02**
Overall 03

GUN GRIFFON BLAZE

□ Publisher: **Swing**
□ Developer: **GameArts**
Another mech game to satisfy robot fetishists everywhere. Although flawed, *GGB* is very entertaining and captures the imagination with considerable flair.
Reviewed **Issue #03**
Players **1**
Graphics **07**/Sound **06**
Gameplay **08**/Life span **06**
Overall 07

H30 SURFING

□ Publisher: **Take 2**
□ Developer: **ASCII**
A depressingly inadequate extreme sports sim with a complicated control method, below average visuals and limited trick list. Dodgy camera angles only serve to obscure the fun that you certainly won't be having. Surf up? No. Most definitely down.
Reviewed **Issue #02**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **04**/Sound **04**
Gameplay **07**/Life span **04**
Overall 04

HOLOGRAM TIME TRAVELER

□ Publisher: **Digital Leisure**
□ Developer: **Sega**
The porting over of Eighties games continues with this sad affair that was never really popular when it first made an appearance in arcades. So why it's been re-released on DVD now is anyone's guess.
Reviewed **Issue #03**
Players **1**
Graphics **00**/Sound **00**
Gameplay **01**/Life span **00**
Overall 00

INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER

□ Publisher: **Konami**
□ Developer: **KCEO**
ISS on PS2 has added genuine squads (at last) and more instant gratification, but kept the clever AI and range of moves. Good, but not yet perfect.
Reviewed **Issue #01**
Players **1-4**
Graphics **07**/Sound **07**
Gameplay **08**/Life span **08**
Overall 08

MADDEN NFL 2001

□ Publisher: **EA Sports**
□ Developer: **EA Sports**
PS2's most accomplished sports game so far – extremely thorough, smoothly presented and highly rewarding to learn. That is if you like American football.
Reviewed **Issue #01**
Players **1-4**
Graphics **09**/Sound **08**
Gameplay **08**/Life span **09**
Overall 08

MIDNIGHT CLUB

□ Publisher: **Rockstar**
□ Developer: **Angel Studios**
Speedy urban racing game, boasting impressively huge NY and London environments – but not much else. Arcade-like in a dated, *Driver*-lite sort of way and altogether forgettable.
Reviewed **Issue #01**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **05**/Sound **06**
Gameplay **04**/Life span **04**
Overall 05

MOTO GP

□ Publisher: **SCEE**
□ Developer: **Namco**
Touted as *Gran Turismo* on two wheels, *Moto GP* is a fantastic simulation of superbike racing. Features stunning replays to boot.
Reviewed **Issue #03**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **08**/Sound **07**
Gameplay **07**/Life span **06**
Overall 07

NHL 2001

□ Publisher: **EA Sports**
□ Developer: **EA Sports (Canada)**
EA Sports's perennial ice hockey licence has stepped up to the mark for its PS2 debut. Blissful graphics and infinitely tweakable gameplay.
Reviewed **Issue #02**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **09**/Sound **08**
Gameplay **08**/Life span **07**
Overall 08

ORPHEN

□ Publisher: **Activision**
□ Developer: **Shade Inc.**
Disappointing Japanese action RPG, short on both depth and adventure thrills, despite such innovative elements as a choice of three story threads to follow. Unfortunately, the game is repetitive and uninviting.
Reviewed **Issue #01**
Players **1**
Graphics **04**/Sound **03**
Gameplay **05**/Life span **03**
Overall 04

POOLMASTER

□ Publisher: **Take 2**
□ Developer: **Ask**
What is fun in the boozier becomes naff on PlayStation 2. Despite tidy ball physics, *Poolmaster*'s gameplay is dull and – based on US 8-Ball – has minimal appeal for Brit hustlers.
Reviewed **Issue #02**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **04**/Sound **06**
Gameplay **06**/Life span **04**
Overall 05

RAYMAN REVOLUTION

□ Publisher: **Ubi Soft**
□ Developer: **Ubi Soft**
Animation-quality graphics provide the eye candy, and real depth with fun mini-games, taxing level design and a genuine sense of fun.
Reviewed **Issue #02**
Players **1-4**
Graphics **09**/Sound **07**
Gameplay **08**/Life span **08**
Overall 08

RC REVENGE PRO

□ Publisher: **Acclaim**
□ Developer: **Acclaim (Cheltenham)**
RC Revenge Pro gives us last-gen graphics, a depressingly sluggish frame rate and hardly taxing gameplay – this is unbelievably less sophisticated than the likes of the PSone's *Crash Team Racing*.
Reviewed **Issue #02**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **02**/Sound **03**
Gameplay **03**/Life span **03**
Overall 03



Clockwise from top left: *Silpheed: The Lost Planet*, *F1 Championship Season 2000*, *Theme Park World*, *Dragon's Lair*, *Street Fighter EX3*, *Disney's Dinosaur* and *Gun Griffon Blaze*.



She might only appear on PSone, but given that it's the Ladder...

Ladder Of Lust

Regular correspondent Mr Paul Rubery spacemailed us with his gaggle of PS2 female-types after last issue's himbofest. We thank him humbly and wish we'd never started this...



1. JILL VALENTINE

RESIDENT EVIL

Bold, brash, wears a uniform, carries a .45... We've read books about people who go for the 'stern' type, Paul.

PS2 appearances: Only in a texture-smoothed way.



2. RINOA HEARTILY

FINAL FANTASY VIII

When she walks by, butterflies flutter about her head and bunnies skip about her toesies. Nurse? The bucket. Now.

PS2 appearances: See above.



3. TINA ARMSTRONG

DEAD OR ALIVE 2

The blonde and 'athletic' star of DOA2 holds her position at three. Bit obvious this one but hey, we'll go with it.

PS2 appearances: DOA2 is on sale now.



4. CLAIRE REDFIELD

RESIDENT EVIL

A timely entry given Code: Veronica X's on the way. For our smug caption, cut and paste from Jill's one.

PS2 appearances: RE Code: Veronica X is coming soon.



5. NINA WILLIAMS

TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT

Surely it's that bit in the intro where she puts on her lipply but a dodgy jumper lets the leggy blonde down.

PS2 appearances: Tekken Tag is on sale now.



6. LARA CROFT

TOMB RAIDER: NEXT GENERATION

Call us irresponsible, but we'll take the bonkers Jolie any day of the week. Not sure if she'd take us, mind...

PS2 appearances: TR: Next Generation is out in 2001.



7. QUISTIS TREPE

FINAL FANTASY VIII

A 'stern' teacher from Square's ace goblinfest. We can see a pattern forming here, Paul...

PS2 appearances: See above.



8. CHUN-LI

STREET FIGHTER EX3

Pointy of face and puppy of eyes, Chun-Li is a lady who'll treat you rough. Still, rather than Skull-o-mania.

PS2 appearances: SFEX3 is on sale now.



9. JUN KAZAMA

TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT

Now forgive us if we're wrong but wethinks her possessed son might have a thing or three to say about this.

PS2 appearances: See above.



10. REGINA

DINO CRISIS

Paul, Paul, Paul, Paul... What's wrong with a nice British lass rather than these oriental tough gals?

PS2 appearances: Dino Crisis 2 is promised for 2001.

Bubbling under: Ling Xiaoyu (Tekken Tag Tournament), Echidna (The Bouncer), Konoko (Oni), Natsumi Arisaki (Swing Away Golf), Cui Li (Street Fighter EX3), Ravele Velvet (TimeSplitters), Elise (SSX).

VOTE FOR THE LADDER OF LUST!

Send your suggestions for the ladies, lads and, hell, aliens who in your opinion deserve to rise up the ladder, to: Ladder Of Lust, Official PlayStation 2 Magazine, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Or email PS2@futurenet.co.uk

READY 2 RUMBLE: ROUND 2

Publisher: Midway

Developer: Midway

Marvellous comedy boxing game, picking assorted, increasingly-ridiculous cartoon fighters against such real life luminaries as Michael Jackson, baseball legend Shaquille O'Neal, and a suspiciously familiar-looking 'Mr President.' Not much depth, good pick-up-and-play laughs.

Reviewed Issue #01

Players 1-2

Graphics 07/Sound 08

Gameplay 07/Life span 06

Overall 07

RIDGE RACER V

Publisher: SCE

Developer: Namco

The world's most frustrating racing game series is back. You've got to respect it for the sense of speed, challenging handling and sharp (perhaps too sharp?) graphics, but jagged edges, limited size and a general lack of originality scupper it. It's a bizarrely airless, unreal-feeling game too. Still, it's PS2's most accomplished racer - for now.

Reviewed Issue #01

Players 1-2

Graphics 06/Sound 07

Gameplay 08/Life span 07

Overall 07

SILENT SCOPE

Publisher: Konami

Developer: KCEO

Slick but simple shooting gallery-style game, spiced up by big city/terrorist/police sniper dressing. Accurate but not over-picky targeting helps you get into the game, but it's tougher than it first seems, while inventive scenarios seemingly loosely based on movies ranging from True Lies to The Last Boy Scout keep the action interesting.

Reviewed Issue #01

Players 1

Graphics 08/Sound 06

Gameplay 08/Life span 07

Overall 07

SILPHEED: THE LOST PLANET

Publisher: Swing

Developer: Treasure/GameArts

With controls much the same as Eighties favourite Space Invaders - by moving left, right, up or down you must take out waves of attacking aliens. Unfortunately it still resembles a 20-year-old game. Avoid.

Reviewed Issue #03

Players 1

Graphics 04/Sound 05

Gameplay 03/Life span 02

Overall 04

SMUGGLER'S RUN

Publisher: Rockstar

Developer: Angel Studios

A great game, with some impressively large free-roaming playing environments. You play a Dukes of Hazzard-style nice-guy moonshine smuggler, on assorted missions to get item A from shack B to tree C while the cops try to stop you. Basically it's an excuse for crazed charging up hill and down dale, trying to make the drop before your truck falls to pieces or you are nabbed by the Yankee rozz. Lacks only a banjo-fuelled soundtrack. An absolute hoot.

Reviewed Issue #01

Players 1-2

Graphics 08/Sound 08

Gameplay 06/Life span 07

Overall 07

SSX

StarPlayer

Publisher: EA Sports Big

Developer: EA Sports (Canada)

This outrageous, inventive, high-speed snowboard game is packed with crazy courses, ranging from Hawaii-based icebergs to giant pinball tables. They are anything but realistic, but who cares. It's fast, stylish, easy to pick up but hard to get great at, and basically rather lovely.

Reviewed Issue #01

Players 1-2

Graphics 09/Sound 08

Gameplay 08/Life span 08

Overall 08

STREET FIGHTER EX3

Publisher: Capcom Eurosoft

Developer: Arika

Fans of the series could be disappointed with this PS2 incarnation, it's not a big enough progression from the PSone games. Tekken Tag Tournament need not worry about losing its title of the best fighting game yet.

Reviewed Issue #03

Players 1-4

Graphics 06/Sound 06

Gameplay 07/Life span 07

Overall 07

SUPER BUST-A-MOVE

Publisher: Acclaim

Developer: Taito

Another update of a classic game, but a pointless one. The cute manga-style graphics and addictive gameplay of yore are here but it offers nothing new. And at \$40?

Reviewed Issue #02

Players 1-2

Graphics 07/Sound 04

Gameplay 05/Life span 02

Overall 05

TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT

Publisher: SCE

Developer: Namco

Fantastically playable and graphically spectacular one- and two-player beat-'em-up. Nearly 40 fighters, plus the new tagging option, and a great sub-game.

Reviewed Issue #01

Players 1-2

Graphics 09/Sound 08

Gameplay 08/Life span 07

Overall 08

THEME PARK WORLD

Publisher: EA

Developer: Bullfrog

Whether you like the thrill of the roller coaster, or the feeling of being in total control, you'll love this God sim. Fill kids up with fatty burgers and high sugar cola after you've let their parents pay extortionate entry fees.

Reviewed Issue #03

Players 1

Graphics 07/Sound 08

Gameplay 08/Life span 06

Overall 07

TIMESPLITTERS

StarPlayer

Publisher: Eidos

Developer: Free Radical Design

Fast and frantic first-person shooter from part of the team responsible for N64 classic GoldenEye. Multiplayer options, meaty weapons, loads of graphical variety and atmosphere, and a barking mad time travel/zombie/aliens story line that acts as a great excuse for them to design any level they fancied. Great mapmaker feature lets you enjoy the same fun.

Surprisingly bloodless and shallower than GoldenEye as a one-player game, but an instant classic nonetheless.

Reviewed Issue #01

Players 1-4

Graphics 09/Sound 09

Gameplay 08/Life span 09

Overall 09

WILD WILD RACING

Publisher: Rage

Developer: Rage

Off-road buggy racing game with merely acceptable looks, and initially discouraging handling. Stick with it though, and it gets much more satisfying, while a wide range of interconnected game modes keep interest high. Indeed, the stunt course from Issue one's demo disc is something of an office favourite.

Reviewed Issue #01

Players 1-2

Graphics 06/Sound 05

Gameplay 06/Life span 07

Overall 06

FACTFILE

Game: **SSX**
Publisher: **EA Sports Big**
Developer: **EA Sports (Canada)**
Review: **OPS2 #01**



#04 SSX

Daniel Mackie captures the instant you pull off a 'stiffy' and unlock the peaks of the ultimate Untracked course.

WHAT?

So what's going on here then? Having cut a blurred swathe through some reality-bending, vertigo-inducing courses via the medium of a waxed plank (or 'snowboard'), you would hope to be rewarded by something a damn sight more thrilling than sore thighs and wind burn. And here you are. Complete SSX and you're presented with a pristine mountainside, totally unmarked by riders before you. It's called Untracked and there's only one way to reach the start of this virgin course. By launching yourself from a hovering overhead helicopter...



HOW?

So how do you get the opportunity to perform a 'skinned flying squirrel' on this unique course? Just attempt the following...

SSX is in no uncertain terms a cracking game, but it will also test your skills to the maximum – especially on the later courses. So to get to Untracked all you have to do is snag yourself a gold in both the Aloha Ice Jam and Pipedream courses and you'll be able to luxuriate in total freedom and enjoy stunning views. If you're having trouble getting there however, turn to our HardCore section starting on page 134, for some tips or see page 138 for a low-down and dirty cheat.

WHY?

This month, our own Tips Pimp, Paul Fitzpatrick explains why he had to choose SSX for OPS2's famed GameOver page.

"Untracked totally subverts your expectations from the game itself. SSX's courses are crammed with features, short cuts and man-made challenges. Rather than try to crank these features up for the hidden course, you are given instead a gorgeous ride down an untouched mountain. After the crazy competition courses this is a beautifully unstructured way to cap the game. The best bit? The moment you leap from the helicopter onto virgin powder for the first time."

WHO?

This month's GameOver illustrator is Daniel Mackie, who enjoys *Tomb Raider*, *TOCA Touring Cars* and *Metal Gear Solid* on PSone.

"SSX looked quite cool from the stills I'd seen so I wanted the girl to look equally as cool but a little bit cheeky as well. I thought I'd try and get as much character into her as possible, but keep her looking like she was from the game. I'll be buying a PS2. I've no doubt they will be popular, as the brand is so strong and it is backward compatible with PSone games. Having seen a taster of SSX, that one is definitely on my list, although I won't be buying football games – they bore me to tears."

YOUR GO!

If you've reached a better end sequence, write to us and tell us what it is, how you got there and why you think it's so great. Prizes on offer for the ones that we feature on this page include a framed print of the final artwork. Write to us at: **GameOver, Official PlayStation 2 Magazine, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Email PS2@futurenet.co.uk**



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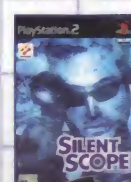
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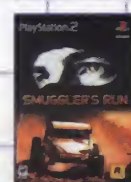
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